

# **ACTION PLAN 2021**

## **UBC Sustainable Cities Commission activities 2021**

### **General situation**

The UBC Sustainable Cities Commission (UBC SCC) is active in several large scale processes and is operating in different policy-, networking-, and capacity-building activities and development projects.

The UBC SCC is chaired by co-chairs Irena Sakalienė from the City of Klaipėda, Per-Arne Nilsson from the City of Malmö and Risto Veivo from the City of Turku and has further strengthened its operations through the work of a dynamic Advisory Board including members from several UBC member cities. The full advisory board was appointed on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Kaunas during the UBC General Conference.

The UBC SCC focuses on supporting its member cities cooperation and improving the knowledge of cities in the Baltic Sea region towards sustainable development and sustainable development goals both locally, regionally and globally.

### **UBC 30 years anniversary celebrations**

The UBC SCC will actively take part in planning events and highlight the UBC 30 year anniversary celebrations via several activities, such as video, podcast/UBC voices, pictures and articles and similar depending on the overall plans.

### **The UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016 – 2021**

UBC SCC is coordinating the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 together with the UBC Executive Board and other UBC Commissions. The UBC SCC has as a strong ambition to help UBC cities with good excellence in fields of water management, climate change and sustainable urban mobility to reach more broad global awareness and reach the goals of the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016 – 2021, to *“become global green economy leaders, climate change leaders and leaders in sustainable urban development”*. Several planning meetings and actions have taken place and the programme is a good example of an interactive process between UBC member cities and the UBC SCC secretariat.

In 2020 the Commission started the work for planning of the next UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2021 – 2030. In 2021 Thematic working groups will be working on specific topics, advisory board and Commission meetings will also work with the upcoming UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2021 – 2030.

### **EUSBSR implementation**

The UBC SCC is strongly involved in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The UBC SCC has received flagship status for several projects and has been actively involved in numerous actions and flagship activities. This EUSBSR strategy goes hand in hand with the new UBC Strategy and UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 and therefore there has been a lot of synergies and cooperation between both processes. In 2021 UBC SCC will continue to participate in the implementation and close cooperation of the EUSBSR.

### **New EU Funding period 2021 – 2027 and project implementation**

Engagement of UBC member cities in international cross-border cooperation will be one of the main goals of the UBC SCC activities. The UBC SCC will also put focus on engaging more cities in the operative activities. The new EU funding period puts focus on the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy and in particular on the transformation of the EU towards a sustainable economy and promote a transition to a low carbon society. UBC and our member cities will have much to achieve with the EU goals and tasks of the EU 2020 Strategy. The economic situation puts pressure on investments but one key issue in the upcoming EU budget will be on building on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth!

The new EU funding period 2021 – 2027 is about to be finalized and the UBC SCC is planning to be involved in several project applications together with a big number of UBC member cities and other partners from the member cities. Applications with focus on brownfield development, sustainable urban mobility, energy efficiency in urban real estate and buildings, storm water management, waste water management (reduction of nutrients from rivers and water bodies), research of mandate and responsibilities of local authorities in the Baltic Sea Region are in different phases of application stage.

The UBC SCC is ready to support the UBC member cities with expertise and recommendations for the upcoming project funding period. This UBC member support has widely been used and has proven to be really useful for many UBC cities.

### **Strong focus on supporting UBC Cities with UN SDG's**

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are in ever stronger focus for many cities globally, and also in Europe and the Baltic Sea Region. In some countries there are national coordination efforts concerning the implementation of the SDG's but in many there is no coordination.

The UBC and the UBC SCC will within the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016 – 2021 take actions and support the UBC member cities in the coordination and the implementation work with the SDGs. Good models and experiences with the SDG work do already exist in the BSR and we will work to further support cooperation and capacity building in order to reach a higher level of sustainability and ultimately the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations. These good practices will be communicated in SDG – VLR webinars during the year.

### **Meetings and events**

#### **EU Policy co-operation sustainable development and Global activity**

In line with the working principles of the UBC, UBC SCC has also contributed strongly to Baltic Sea Regional and European policy co-operation processes on cities' regional governance and sustainable urban development. The commission is representing the UBC at the CBSS/ Baltic 2030 -Expert Group on Sustainable Development and BSR Climate Platform. UBC SCC is also an observer of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM). Through successful project management the UBC SCC has received Flagship status for several projects (CitiesMulti modal BSR Waters, CASCADE). High level status and visibility of UBC work is important for recognition of the high level of ambition among UBC member cities.

With the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 there is also a clear intention to strengthen the activity on the global arena. This can be done in close cooperation with the UBC member cities and their ongoing processes. The World Business Council on Sustainable

Cities, the UN Climate policy process and the UN Smart City process are examples of global processes with potential interest in the excellence of UBC cities.

The cooperation with CDP, based on the Second Memorandum of Understanding between UBC and CDP signed in October 2018, will be intensified in 2019–2021, with a large scale campaign where UBC or UBC SCC promotes the CDP benchmark tool for Climate smart actions in UBC cities. The results from the third year benchmarking of UBC – CDP joint efforts will be presented in the UBC General Conference in Kaunas in October 2019. Joint webinars with CDP will take place.

### **UBC internal communication and networking activities**

As a general and ongoing task are the improvements of our communication activities, with the focus of improving the interaction between UBC member cities and the commission. The annually organized UBC Sustainable Cities Commission meeting works as the main networking event for its member cities.

Several (3 – 4 per year) UBC Sustainability Bulletin will be published in 2021. The Bulletin includes updates from the Commission and the secretariat, news from its member cities, updates and news from projects and events. It is sent to UBC SCC contacts and published on the UBC SCC website. In addition the UBC SCC will continue to use social media as an efficient tool for sharing information about our UBC member cities, important events and success stories in order to improve the positive picture of UBC and the Baltic Sea Region. The UBC SCC continuously renews and updates the web-pages. Please see [www.ubc-sustainable.net](http://www.ubc-sustainable.net)

**Björn Grönholm - Head of Secretariat, UBC – Sustainable Cities Commission on behalf of the UBC SCC Advisory board**