

UBC LA21 ACTION PROGRAM 2000-2002

1. Local Agenda 21

The Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) shares the view that Local Agenda 21 (LA21) consists of the local participatory process and the local action program for achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development is a continuous, controlled and democratic process of societal change at global, regional and local levels, aimed at improving the quality of life for present and future generations. Sustainable development integrates environmental protection and efficient use of natural resources into other essential social, economic and cultural activities. Preserving biodiversity and reducing anthropogenic global climate change are examples of environmental goals of this process.

Although, if Local Agenda 21s always necessarily are local processes adapted to local circumstances, there are some things that successful ones do have in common. They concentrate on all the three central aspects of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic), they utilise co-operation/networking between all the stakeholders of local community, they conceive Local Agenda 21 as a continuous process and aim at making a local action plan (and emphasise local action), they implement strong elements of public participation (Local Agenda 21 Forum), they have a strong future perspective/vision, they motivate/connect local action with global impact, and they emphasise both shared responsibility and personal commitment.

2. International Context of Local Agenda 21 Work

Since the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) 1992, thousands of municipalities all around the world have committed themselves to sustainable development and worked out local action plans for sustainable development, Local Agenda 21s. The mandate and challenge to this work was formulated in Chapter 28 of the Rio Document, Agenda 21.

In Europe local authorities have joined their efforts through numerous networks, the most prominent one in this respect being the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (the Campaign). The Campaign was launched by 80 municipalities and five networks at the Aalborg Conference 1994, and the work has then been further developed at the Lisbon Conference 1996 and at the four regional conferences during 1998-1999. The Campaign now comprises over 500 local authorities throughout Europe. Local authorities become campaign members by signing the Aalborg Charter, which is the basic policy document of the Campaign.

Many of the UBC member cities have contributed to the Campaign, and the UBC functioned as one of the main organisers of one of the regional conferences, the Baltic Local Agenda 21 - Health and Sustainable Cities Conference, which was organised in Turku, Finland in September 1998.

400 people from 27 countries participated the Turku Conference, most of the participants representing local authorities in the BSR countries. The conference endorsed a political statement on Local Agenda 21 work in the Baltic Sea Region. This statement, the Turku Statement, provides all actors with strong goals and guidelines for the work to be carried out in the coming years. The statement has also been included into the strategic documents of the Campaign.

In the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), very prominent work has been carried out during the recent years in the Baltic 21 process (Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region). The Baltic 21 Action Plan was approved

by all the BSR states and the EU in June 1998, and the implementation process has been going on since then. In the implementation local authorities play an important role, and in the Baltic 21 document the UBC has been defined as one of the implementing organisations. The UBC has also been assigned a special Lead Party responsibility on Joint Action 4, City Co-operation and Sustainable Development Issues in Cities and Communities. Furthermore, also a special network of organisations and experts, Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum, has been founded (in Lahti, 1997), to support the local level implementation. The UBC is also one of the central actors in this network.

Agenda 21 is a global movement which has strong support and contributions in Europe and in the Baltic Sea Region. Implementation of Agenda 21 requires strong efforts and co-operation between all levels: global, continental, regional, national, subregional and local. By active Local Agenda 21 work the UBC is an important contributor and participant of this large multilevel process. This brings about many good contacts and co-operation possibilities for the whole organisation. And, most important, such work and participation makes a strong contribution to the future of our member cities, and it also means that our organisation is taking care of its own global responsibility.

3. Why Local Agenda 21 Action Program for the UBC?

3.1 Recognising our Responsibility and Potential

Cities and other local level actors have a huge potential in turning our common future into a sustainable one. Local Agenda 21 is the best existing concept for mobilising this potential. The Union of the Baltic Cities, as a major network of cities in the Baltic Sea Region, recognises its responsibility for making our future a sustainable one. The purpose of this action program is to communicate our vision, create strategies, set guidelines and define actions for our work on Local Agenda 21s both within our organisation and with other actors for the three-year period 2000 - 2002.

The UBC has during the recent years carried out a lot of good work in the field of Local Agenda 21. The efforts have consisted of several projects, information work, meetings, workshops and even conferences, and participation in large international processes like Baltic 21. Many of these activities have been very successful and there are good basis for their continuation and further development.

3.2 Serving the Member Cities

It is always necessary to plan the activities of the UBC according to the real needs of its members. In order to facilitate this with regard to Local Agenda 21 work, the Commission on Environment organised in 1998 the large UBC Local Agenda 21 Survey. According to the results, almost 90% of UBC member cities are actively working on Local Agenda 21 or currently planning to start such work. The results also provide a good basis for planning services to support these activities of the member cities.

3.3 Strategies for Co-operation

The UBC is strongly involved in international Local Agenda 21 co-operation with other actors, and there is to a certain extent a need to agree on our strategies for this co-operation both in the Baltic Sea region (BSR) and in the whole Europe. The UBC has so far made a good contribution on both of these levels. For example the Baltic 21, Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), World Health Organisation / Healthy Cities Project (WHO) and the European Union (EU) have been our co-operation partners in various Local Agenda 21 activities. The UBC also is one of the core organisations within the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum Network. The work with all these partners will benefit from a longer-term strategy agreed on a wide basis in our organisation.

3.4 Making Our Own Activities and Practises More Sustainable

One more important reason for creating our own Local Agenda 21 Action Plan is the need of the UBC to act in a sustainable way. We should integrate sustainability to all the work of our organisation, not just to consider it as a part of the work of one commission and/or some projects, not just an issue for

co-operation, but as a principle that should be an integral part of everything that we do. Therefore it may also be necessary to develop and agree on internal sustainability recommendations for the UBC.

3.5 Co-ordination and Synergy

There are also a lot of good activities in many member cities - even good Local Agenda 21 co-operation projects consisting of several member cities. There is obviously a need of, first to list all these activities, and secondly to a certain extent to co-ordinate them. Such a listing and co-ordination could very well be one of the functions of this Action Program. This may bring synergy, and it can even enable the UBC later on to search for funding for the whole program and to thereby support the work even more widely.

Most of the Local Agenda 21 activities of the UBC so far have been mainly carried out by the Commission on Environment. However, Local Agenda 21 work should be a cross-sectoral effort, and cross-sectoral approaches usually bring the best results in this work. Therefore there is still a need of getting the other commissions more involved. Furthermore, this also implies involving more capacities and human and other resources.

4. Analysing the Present Situation

4.1 Situation in Europe in Brief

The European Union (EU) has been adopting the principles of sustainability more and more during the recent years. The demand of sustainability is increasingly integrated into the different policies of the EU. The integration of sustainable development into EU legislation and policies means, that municipalities both in the EU member states and in the accession countries have to take this into account in their administrative measures and practises.

At the same time, the European Union saw the development of an urban agenda during the last years. Important steps of this process were the publication of two Communications of the European Commission ('Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union' in 1997, 'Sustainable Urban Development in the EU: A Framework for Action' in 1998) and the organisation of the European Forum in Vienna in 1998. This work has been carried out cross-sectorally in co-operation between several DGs of the European Commission and with wide participation from European municipalities (EU Urban Forum). The EU Urban Policy will contain strong sustainability elements, and it will affect UBC member cities both inside and outside of EU.

Also, many European and global organisations and networks carry out strong sustainability and Local Agenda 21 work in Europe. The European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign and its five co-ordinating networks (ICLEI, Eurocities, CEMR, UTO and WHO) are examples of such organisations. It is important for UBC members that the services provided by all these actors are targeted according to the needs of our members, and that they are also well co-ordinated.

On the European level there are both clear challenges for the UBC to improve its services to its members and great potentials to influence the developments according to the needs of its members.

4.2 Situation in the BSR in Brief

In the Baltic Sea Region, the intensive co-operation on all levels from municipalities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to national governments is very prominent and brings good results. Baltic 21 is a unique initiative in the world. The UBC plays an important role in its implementation, and it is partly due to UBC active participation that the Baltic 21 Action Program was also planned and formulated according to the needs of cities.

The different countries in the BSR are in different stages in their Agenda 21 work. In Sweden, principally every municipality has already started the Local Agenda 21 process, in some countries maybe half of the municipalities have started, and in some there exists so far just some good pilot projects. In any case in every country of the BSR the situation is generally quite favourable for further

strengthening the work. Naturally, there are also a lot of problems to be solved, and there is a constant need, e.g., for exchange of experiences and spreading of good practises. In the BSR there are also a group of other international organisations which by their work contribute to sustainability. Many of these organisations already are UBC co-operation partners, and some are potential partners.

The Baltic Local Agenda 21 Network (BLA21F) is a common effort of many cities and organisations, which aims at consolidating the implementation of Baltic 21 at the local level. The strategies of BLA21F are currently being formulated, and the UBC is strongly involved in this work. Environmental Centres for Administration and Technology (ECAT) provide an excellent nationally operating partner with strong networks and implementation experience. WHO Healthy Cities Project and its Baltic co-ordination are important partners too, as well as Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), and on the intergovernmental level Coalition of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). Also Baltic Sea States Subregional Conference (BSSSC) and some other organisations may offer some co-operation potential. In addition to these international organisations, the various associations of local and regional authorities also provide good co-operation possibilities on the national level.

4.3 Situation in the Member Cities

In 1998, The UBC Commission on Environment in co-operation with the Åbo Akademi University carried out a Local Agenda 21 Survey in the UBC member cities. 70% of the member cities answered to the survey. According to the results 73% (of those cities that answered) have an on-going Local Agenda 21 project, 13% are planning to start one, and only in 12% of the cities such activities have not been proposed. The UBC member cities are thus very active in Local Agenda 21, and this is a good basis for the work of the UBC too. A good basis is also the fact that 73% of the cities are basing their Local Agenda 21 activities on combining local and imported models. This implies that the spreading of good practises and the exchange of information and experiences can be very beneficial. Furthermore, according to the survey, environmental administration (21%) is the most usual initiator of Local Agenda 21, but the activities of city leadership (15%), local environmental groups (13%) and other stakeholders of the local community also play an important role. This means that there are good bases for involving also other groups in the Local Agenda 21 work in addition to the environmental departments/staff.

One of the conclusions of the survey also was that the situation really is quite different on the different sides of the Baltic Sea. Nordic Countries, Germany and also to a certain extent Poland are quite advanced in Local Agenda 21 work, whereas the countries on the Eastern side of the sea are in most cases more at the start. However, also in most of these countries, there are already some good examples of successful Local Agenda 21s which can be used as local good practise examples.

Participants of the Local Agenda 21 Project SAIL (Spreading Awareness and Fostering the Implementation of Local Agenda 21 Around the Baltic Sea) compiled the following list (spring 1999) of the specific problems and obstacles to this work in the Baltic states, Russia and Poland: general inflexibility of administration and individuals – no cross-sector co-operation, lack of visionary thinking, lack of strategic thinking– acute problems take all attention, lack of financial commitment, no history of public participation, lack of skills – administrative and management skills, commitment is not solid – no personal responsibility, environmental departments are new – their position weak, conservative attitudes, lack of information, environmental issues are not valued, decision-makers are listening but not implementing, tendency to fulfilling the formal requirements rather than contents, general lack of financial, human, administrative and 'office' resources, structural and legal frameworks are not favourable for local authorities, lack of valid data on environmental, social and economic situation. It is, e.g., these problems that the UBC should be aware of when developing Local Agenda 21 activities for its member cities in these countries.

4.4 UBC LA 21 Activities So Far

Both the UBC as an organisation and its member cities as independent actors have been very active in their Local Agenda 21 work. Here are just listed a few examples of the various activities undertaken so far.

- The UBC has actively participated in the Baltic 21 process by representation in the Senior Officials Group and by approving the Lead Party responsibility over Joint Action 4, City co-operation and sustainable development issues in cities and communities.
- Strong participation in organising of the Baltic Local Agenda 21 - Health and Sustainable Cities Conference was a remarkable contribution to Local Agenda 21 work in local, national, regional and European levels.
- The UBC, the Commission on Environment in particular, has carried out many projects on Local Agenda 21, or with strong Local Agenda 21 dimensions. Examples of such projects are Municipal Environmental Audits (MEA), the SAIL Project (Spreading Awareness and Fostering the Implementation of LA 21 around the Baltic Sea), and the Program for Human Resource Development and Institutional Strengthening.
- UBC has carried out two Local Agenda 21 surveys among the member cities. The latest one, from 1998, provides very useful results for the planning of LA 21 activities of any actor in the BSR.
- UBC Commission on Environment initiated the informal/unofficial UBC Local Agenda 21 Working Group in 1998. The group has had three meetings so far, where altogether 70 representatives of member cities participated. In addition to the exchange of experiences, the group has contributed strongly to the preparations of this action program.
- The Commission on Environment Secretariat, on the initiative of the working group, has started the UBC LA 21 Mailing List which offers a good channel for quick communication and spreading information.
- Several UBC bulletins (Baltic Cities Bulletin, Environmental Bulletin and Social Bulletin) have served as channels for exchanging information and experiences about LA 21 work.
- Many UBC member cities have carried out outstanding Local Agenda 21 work, both in their own cities and in international co-operation projects. For example the City of Tartu has carried out the first comprehensive LA 21 process in Estonia, and the cities of Nacka and Lahti have contributed greatly in their co-operation with St. Petersburg. Lahti has also initiated the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum Network by organising an international seminar in 1997, where this network was founded. Also many other member cities have carried out excellent contributions.

5. Our Vision and Strategies

5.1 Vision

The Union of the Baltic Cities, as a major network of cities in the Baltic Sea Region, recognises its responsibility for making our future a sustainable one. The UBC has the potential and the will to contribute to sustainable development for the good of the citizens of its member cities and for the common future of our cities, countries, the Baltic Sea Region, Europe and the Planet Earth.

The vision of the UBC is that:

- The cities in the Baltic Sea Region will, using Local Agenda 21 as a central tool, through a process of balanced economic, social and environmental development strive towards sustainability and democracy, and the Baltic Sea Region as a whole will develop towards a more sustainable future. All UBC members will have started their own Local Agenda 21 processes by the latest during 2000-2002.
- UBC and its members will play an important part in the advancement of sustainability in Europe and contribute to a balanced development of the whole continent by facilitating co-operation between cities in the EU and in those countries of the BSR, which are not EU members.
- The co-operation between all stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region for sustainable development will be strengthened, and Baltic 21 will be successfully implemented. The UBC will make a strong contribution to the implementation process.

- The quality of the Local Agenda 21 work will increase in all UBC member cities, e.g., through spreading of good practises, exchange of experiences, increasing evaluation of activities, benchmarking, and development projects. The services provided by the UBC to its members will provide an excellent basis for this.
- The member cities themselves will support sustainability through monitoring, education, fees, and by all other means they possess.
- The internal work of the UBC will become more sustainable and all UBC activities will be organised according to the internal sustainability recommendations.

5.2 Strategies for Serving and Supporting the Member Cities

According to the results of the UBC Local Agenda 21 Survey 1998, the following activities would correspond to the needs of the member cities. The feedback from various already implemented projects and other activities support the results of the survey.

With our network we can offer added value to our members by:

- taking strong initiatives for supporting sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region,
- exchanging experiences in meetings, workshops and seminars, and through our bulletins, web-pages and mailing lists,
- sharing information and expertise, and cumulating resources for our common activities,
- evaluating our cities' practises and activities and implementing benchmarking,
- building human capacities by training,
- spreading good practises,
- organising development projects,
- supporting the LA 21 work in our member cities by our example (developing the Agenda 21 of the UBC, etc.), and
- by making the Baltic Cities' voice heard in various forums.

The strategy of the Local Agenda 21 work of the UBC for serving the member cities will be to mobilise the potential of the network by all means listed above.

5.3 Strategies for Contributing in the International Co-operation

The developments of the policies and legislation of the EU with regards to advancing sustainability set many challenges also for the Local Agenda 21 work of the UBC. *The strategy of the UBC will be to closely follow the developments of these policies and to seek to advance its members' possibilities to adapt to these changes and to utilise the possibilities that will emerge, e.g., with regards to various EU programs and funding possibilities on sustainable development.*

The work carried out by various European and Global organisations like the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign and its five co-ordinating networks (ICLEI, Eurocities, CEMR, UTO and WHO) is often very beneficial also for many of our members. *The strategy of the UBC will be to seek good co-operation with all these actors and try to influence and contribute to the further development of the Campaign according to the needs of the Baltic cities.*

The UBC plays an important role in the implementation of the Baltic 21 Action Program, particularly Joint Action 4 (City Co-operation and Sustainable Development in Cities and Local Communities). *The strategy of the UBC in Baltic 21 is to further contribute to the local level issues and to contribute strongly to the implementation in its own members and other cities.*

The situation in all countries of the BSR is relatively favourable for Local Agenda 21 Work. As different countries in the BSR are in very different stages in their Agenda 21 work, *the strategy of the UBC will be to enhance the exchange of experiences and the multi-way transfer of know-how, and to contribute to balanced advancement in the whole region.*

In the BSR there are also a group of other international organisations which by their work contribute to sustainability. Many of these organisations already are UBC co-operation partners, and some are potential partners. *The strategy of the UBC is to strongly contribute to the development of BLA21F as a network, and to search good co-operation and synergy with all the other relevant actors like ECATs, Healthy Cities, ICLEI, CCB, CBSS, NCM, BSSSC, etc., by, e.g., joint projects and continuous exchange of experiences and insights.*

6. Actions

6.1 Responsibilities and Actions in International Co-operation

6.1.1 Strong participation in Baltic 21 (SOG, JO4, JO7)

The UBC has accepted the Lead Party / Responsible Actor role over Joint Action 4 of Baltic 21, City co-operation and sustainable development issues in cities and communities. The UBC aims at providing a strong leadership in the implementation of the Joint Action 4 and, by doing this, to foster the implementation of the Baltic Agenda 21 at the local level among the UBC members and other cities and local communities of the Baltic Sea Region. This will also include actions to strengthen the interest of other actors in the region towards contributing to Joint Action 4, and increasing co-operation possibilities between the UBC respective commissions and Baltic 21 sectors.

The UBC will organise a working group for the co-ordination of the implementation of Joint Action 4 and also contribute strongly through its various LA 21 related activities. The working group will consist of UBC experts/representatives as well as experts/representatives from other interested Baltic 21 Members and stakeholders. The UBC will also continue its successful work in the SOG (Senior Officials Group), which co-ordinates the implementation of the whole Baltic 21 Action Program, and seek possibilities of becoming involved also in Joint Action 7, Increasing Consumers' Awareness of Sustainable Development. The UBC, as one of the core organisations of the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum network, which aims at the local level implementation of Baltic 21, will contribute strongly both to the development of its strategies and their practical implementation.

6.1.2 Co-operation with European and Global Actors

The UBC will contribute to the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign by various projects and active co-operation and seek possibilities for a membership in the Campaign's Co-ordinating Committee. The UBC will co-operate actively with ICLEI, WHO Healthy Cities, ECATs, RECs, and all other relevant actors as well.

6.1.3 Involvement in the Development and Implementation of the EU Urban Agenda

The UBC will closely follow-up to the further development of the EU urban agenda and contribute to this process. It will seek to promote sustainable development towards the EU and to establish links between this Action Programme and the policy development of the EU. E.g., the UBC will ask all its members to submit their cases to the new Good Practice Database on Urban Management and Sustainability of the European Commission.

6.1.4 Co-operation with National Actors

The UBC will seek an even closer co-operation in the BSR with the ministries of the environment and the national associations of local and regional authorities. The UBC will also encourage these national co-operation partners to nominate special staff for serving municipalities in Local Agenda 21 activities.

6.1.5 International co-operation with single cities (and between single cities)

The UBC will in all relevant ways facilitate the co-operation between its members and also between the members and other cities, e.g., cities in other parts of our common Europe.

6.1.6 International supporters

the UBC will continue establishing good contacts with the EU authorities, other relevant institutions which are active in Europe, and the Nordic Council of Ministers in order to find support for the implementation of its actions in the field of Local Agenda 21.

6.2 Communication and Co-operation within the UBC

6.2.1 Exchange of Experiences

The UBC will continuously organise various ways for the exchange of experiences and spreading of good practises, e.g., meetings, workshops and seminars. The Local Agenda 21 Working Group is a good tool for these purposes, as well as the meetings of different UBC commissions. The UBC bulletins, web pages and mailing lists will also be extensively used.

6.2.2 Cultural Activities

The UBC will seek possibilities of using cultural activities for changing attitudes and behaviour.

6.2.3 Implementing Concrete Goals

The UBC will also investigate possibilities of implementing specific practical goals like increasing garbage collection, segregation of waste and re-cycling in its member cities.

6.2.4 Participation of Youth

Youth is a resource which maybe has not yet been utilised enough in the work of the UBC. Local Agenda 21 is about the future, and young people are to a great extent the stakeholders of this future. The UBC could integrate the points of view of youth into all of its LA 21 work. There could also be a youth reference group within the UBC and youth contact persons in each city.

6.3 On-going Projects

6.3.1 SAIL

The goal of SAIL Project is to facilitate the development of Local Agenda 21 plans and processes in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. The project produces a comprehensive information package on Local Agenda 21 in all local languages and organises several events for exchange of experiences. The materials will be available for all interested.

This project is a common initiative of the UBC, ICLEI, ECAT-LT, and the cities of Lahti, St. Petersburg, Tartu and Jurmala, co-funded by the EU PHARE and TACIS-sponsored Baltic Sea Project Facility (BSPF), and run as a contribution to BLA21F Network. The project was started in Jan-99 and it will close in Mar-00.

6.3.2 MEA

Municipal Environmental Auditing projects co-ordinated and/or supported by the UBC are currently going on in Estonia, Lithuania (with strong implementation support from ECAT-LT), and Finland. These projects utilise the model developed by the UBC in the pilot project in Tallinn, and their processes and results can also be used for facilitating LA 21 work in the implementing cities. MEAs have been so far co-funded by the EU (LIFE), the World Bank, ministries of the environment and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The UBC aims at further developing and spreading the MEA model and starting new audits.

6.3.3 Member Cities' Projects

There are going on - and have been - very good co-operation projects, e.g., between the following member cities: Nacka - St. Petersburg, Lahti - St. Petersburg, Kalmar - Panevezys, Klaipeda - Koege - Kristianstad - Espoo, and many others too.

The UBC aims at encouraging member cities to start such projects and gathers information about such activities and spreads good practise cases.

6.4 New Project Possibilities

6.4.1 Best City Practises

The central idea of this planned project is to spread good practises among cities in the Baltic Sea Region and to implement them by benchmarking in city pairs. The UBC Commission on Environment has submitted a funding proposal to the Nordic Minister Council, and the decision is expected by the end of September 1999.

6.4.2 Success Factors of Local Environmental Policy for Agenda 21 and EU Enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region

This planned project includes many well-targeted activities concentrating on the following key components: research, education, and information. The project partners and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment have already committed to co-fund the activities. A funding application will be submitted to the European Commission in September 1999, and the decision is expected in October-November.

6.4.3 Project and Activity Ideas from the Local Agenda 21 Working Group

During the meetings of the UBC Local Agenda 21 Working Group, many new project ideas have been “brainstormed” and preliminary drafted. Some of these ideas are presented here. The intention is to further elaborate these ideas during the following meetings, and step by step to develop them into implemented projects and/or activities.

Translations of Pilot Agendas - Spreading Good Practises: There has been an initiative recently from the City of Tartu to make the pilot Local Agenda 21s of the Baltic states, Poland and Russia achievable to colleagues in other countries by translating them into English.

Management Systems: There has also been an initiative from the City of Kalmar to start a new UBC project on environmental management systems. The idea would be to make ISO environmental and quality management standards available in all BSR-languages, to develop user friendly guidelines for supporting the implementation of management systems within municipalities and to support actions that would increase the number of qualified auditors and consultants within the Eastern part of the BSR. The project would also include training and gathering of experiences and good practises.

Co-operation with Universities: Universities in the Baltic Cities are in many ways a very good resource for LA 21 work. They can carry out LA 21 research, experiences can be exchanged between universities and municipalities, and research results can be used for developing the practical LA 21 work. The UBC will continue its active co-operation with the Baltic Universities Network and contribute to developing the universities’ co-operation in the field of LA 21 research.

Lifestyle Changes: Similar lifestyle changes which have occurred in the Western European countries in the last 25 years have during the latest decades started to take place in the Eastern European countries too. The amount of pollution from point sources in Western countries has decreased greatly in the last 25 years but the amount of pollution from non-point sources has increased during this time due to lifestyle changes. Similar trends are now prominent also in the eastern cities. There is a constant need to affect the lifestyles in cities in the whole Baltic Sea Region.

LA 21 Youth Projects: The idea of a youth exchange would be to have the young people of the Baltic Sea Region either through writing, poetry, painting, pictures, theatre, music or any medium they choose to describe their city. It has been also discussed how to bring Local Agenda 21 into schools. The hardest difficulty may be staying within the guidelines of the school curriculum and having Local Agenda 21 as part of these guidelines.

Interest has also been shown for having a home page under the UBC network for the children of the cities in the UBC. Use of the Internet can help with projects between young people, the problem

being the high cost of Internet connections in some countries plus the cost of having a school linked up to the Internet. Funding to connect to the Internet would be a great help for many schools.

Democracy and Minorities: With regard to democracy, Local Agenda 21 can be used to spread the themes and ideas of what democracy is. Minorities' points of views should also be involved. Research needs to be done to see what will encourage people to come to LA 21 meetings and what can be done to make these meetings a valued part of their life. It is often said that the municipalities do not have time for LA21 work. One suggestion may be to have people who are unemployed and have interest to work on LA21 in cities.

Economic Agenda: The economic Agenda 21 could try to explain to consumers why they should pay more for environmentally less harmful goods. The more the public shows interest in and buys such goods, the less expensive they will become as the demand for them increases and companies start producing them at cheaper prices. The power of the consumer needs to be shown, and it is especially important to show women the power they have in countries where they are the primary purchaser of goods.

Involvement of the Private Sector: As requested in the Turku statement, municipalities should actively seek and develop tools for co-operation and networking with local businesses, recognising the important role that the private sector plays in global, national and local economies and the opportunities this provides for a more sustainable future.

Exchange with Developing Countries: This could include exchange of technical expertise and knowledge with local authorities in countries whose economies are in transition and between countries with developing economies in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This exchange should also include awareness raising, information and control on how "western" consumption and production patterns cause serious degradation on other countries.

More Ideas: Also ideas on Sport competitions linked to sustainable development, projects against narcotics, sustainability activities for elderly people, green families' co-operation, eco-tourism, sustainability projects for the unemployed, youth projects on search for inner harmony / balance, mass-media projects, and education projects have been discussed in the UBC Local Agenda 21 Working Group.

7. Organising the work

7.1 Responsibilities for Implementation

The UBC Board has the main responsibility of the implementation of this Action Program. It is to discuss and decide on strategies, update the Program, and to evaluate the progress. The UBC Local Agenda 21 Working Group, which has already been started as a strong initiative supported by the commissions on environment, and health and social affairs, many cities and active LA 21 experts, will be formally established as a part of the adoption of this Action Program. This working group will be an open group to all UBC members, and it is intended for boosting the implementation of this Action Program, for sharing experiences and expertise, and for facilitating a wide participation. The Working Group will utilise the services of the UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat. Practical co-ordination, preparation work and facilitation will be carried out by the Commission on Environment Secretariat, which will report to the UBC Board. Each commission and member city has its own specific responsibility of running projects on Local Agenda 21 or with Local Agenda 21 dimensions.

Funding of the actions will be a shared initiative of all those involved.

7.2 Draft Schedule of activities for 1999 - 2000

- SAIL Project goes on until February-March 2000 - five dissemination meetings will be organised in early 2000
- MEAs go on, and new ones are to be started
- New projects - Best City Practises and Success Factors projects will be started according to funding decisions
- UBC LA 21 Working Group twice a year - new activities and projects are to be developed and implemented according to this Action Program
- Baltic 21 JO 4 Working Group twice a year
- Continuous information work (bulletins, web, mailing list)
- Member Cities' activities

8. Recommendations for Making the UBC Sustainable

There is a constant need for the UBC to increase sustainability of all of its actions. The UBC Local Agenda 21 Working Group will prepare a proposal of Recommendations for Making the UBC Sustainable to the UBC Board. These recommendations could include issues like: committing all UBC workers to sustainable practises, use of re-cycled paper, copying on both sides, favour short-distance meetings, combine meetings, use public transportation , and favour electronic communication.