

ACTIVITY REPORT

UBC SUSTAINABLE CITIES COMMISSION

2015 - 2017

1. General description

UBC Sustainable Cities Commission (UBC SCC), one of the 7 commissions of the Union of the Baltic Cities is hosted by the City of Turku, Finland. The UBC Sustainable Cities Commission is responsible for the Union's work on sustainability issues including Coordination of the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016-2021 and managing numerous projects in the field of urban sustainability. The commission actively creates and runs different development projects and organizes policy-, networking-, and capacity-building activities. However, the most important resource of the commission are the active UBC member cities who contribute with their knowledge, experiences, motivation and strong involvement for the mutual benefit.

In September 2017, the UBC SCC Secretariat, led by Mr Björn Grönholm and consisting of professional staff of 16 persons from Finland, Poland, Germany, Russia, Ukraine and Estonia are coordinating the Commission and Secretariat related tasks. The UBC Sustainable Cities Commission is steered by three co-chairpersons in close cooperation with the Head of the UBC Secretariat and the Advisory Board. The work of the Commission builds on the interest and needs of UBC member cities that propose activities and take active roles in our common cooperation.

During 2015-2017, the UBC Sustainable Cities Commission (UBC SCC) had three Co-chairs: Ms Dace Liepnice, City of Liepaja, Latvia, Mr Per-Arne Nilsson, City of Malmö, Sweden and Mr Risto Veivo, City of Turku, Finland. The Advisory Board members were; Mr Andres Jaadla City of Rakvere, Estonia, Ms Saara Vauramo City of Lahti, Finland, Mr Olli-Pekka Mäki City of Turku, Finland, Ms Rieke Müncheberg City of Rostock, Germany, Ms Gunita Osite City of Jelgava, LV, Ms Irena Sakaliene City of Klaipeda, Lithuania, Ms Dagmara Nagorka-Kmiezkiec, City of Gdansk, Poland, Mr Andreas Hedrén City of Växjö, Sweden, Ms Ann Häger City of Malmö, Sweden, Mr Mogens Björn Nielsen City of Århus, Denmark. The Advisory board has met 4 times during 2015 – 2017. Three times face to face and one time via video-conferencing.

In its day to day work, UBC SCC staff has been mainly involved in the following activities:

- Communication tasks, updating contact databases to UBC member cities, managing web- and social media pages, preparing bulletin, newsletter, arranging commission and project related meetings and video conference facilities.
- Project management, preparation of project applications, coordination and participation in the projects.

- Event planning, involved and co-hosting conferences, workshops, meetings, capacity building activities on request.
- Benchmarking, arrangement of benchmarking events, initiating surveys and questionnaires.
- Organizing trainings in projects or on request by member cities.
- Active involvement in Policy Development towards national and EU authorities. During 2016 and 2017 actively also to UN COP 22 and COP23.

All in all, during 2015-2017 UBC SCC has been involved in approximately 10 large scale projects, either as leading partner or as project partner, with a budget of approximately 50 million euros. In these projects more than 40 UBC cities have been or are involved. For the moment, September 2017, totally 7 project applications are under planning or under evaluation.

2. Seminars/conferences

Timeline of the events that UBC SCC participated or organised during 2015-2017 (note, listed are only the major open seminars/conferences). More than working 120 meetings have taken place in projects and the secretariat during the reporting period:

October 27-30 2015 XII UBC General Conference was held in Gdynia, Poland. One of the highlights was the adoption of the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016-2021.

June 15-17 2016 UBC SCC participated in a joint Meeting of UBC Commissions of Sustainability in Baltic Cities in the City of Słupsk and the City of Ustka, Poland. Altogether 36 participants were present at the event. The meeting focused on Sustainable Safe Cultural Events. It offered an efficient networking and dissemination opportunity for the cities to exchange experiences, learn from each other, discuss and develop possible common project ideas and establish co-operation.

September 8-9 2016 second UBC SCC Advisory Board meeting was organised in Lahti, Finland.

September 15 - 16 2016 participating in the BSSSC Annual Conference and involved in the BSR Interreg Programme plenary panel on Capitalization on and results of EU funding.

September 28-29 2016 – iWater international event on storm water management was organized in Turku, Finland. It was a closed event for the project partners and it focused on coordination and implementation of the project work packages WP2 “Integrated Storm Water Management” and WP4 “Capacity Building & Piloting Multifunctional SW Solutions”.

September 28-30 2016 the CIVITAS FORUM Conference 2016 was organized in Gdynia, Poland, with the theme "Shaping the mobility of tomorrow". The event gathered hundreds of CIVITAS stakeholders from around Europe, all of whom are devoted to the development of sustainable urban mobility in their cities. The three-day programme of the conference offered collaborative workshops, state-of-the-art presentations and interesting site visits.

October 12-16 2016 - UBC SCC Commission Meeting in Jelgava, Latvia gathered 34 participants. The meeting focused on the integration of Natura 2000 sites with urban planning and sustainable development, as well as on integrated storm water management.

November 30 – 2 December 2016 Co-arrangement of the first Sustainable City Malmö Conference on request of UBC member city Malmö. Conference focusing on the UN Sustainability Goals and the agenda for the Baltic Sea Region.

November 7 2016 UBC SCC was invited with a key note presentation at the 25 year anniversary meeting of Council of Baltic Sea States and the Baltic 2030 Expert Group in Stockholm.

November 8 – 10 2017 UBC SCC participated in several events of the 7th Strategy Forum on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in Stockholm.

February 14-15 2017 IWAMA Capacity Development Workshop in Boltenhagen, Germany was held. During the first day, experts from the universities of Germany and Austria introduced their presentations on energy trends in the wastewater treatment sphere. Different aspects were brought up: digestion process, addressing the surplus sludge, operating conditions. Later, selected case studies from wastewater treatment plants in the region presented their excellence in energy management.

March 6-7 2017 – Co-arrangement of the first Baltic Sea Future Congress - Innovation, vision and leadership for a sustainable Baltic Sea region in Stockholm, Sweden on request of city of Stockholm. The congress was highly appreciated by 300 stakeholders, who all heard the inauguration by H.R.H. Crown princess Victoria of Sweden, UN Appointed advocated for the Agenda2030 and highly dedicated to saving the Baltic Sea. UBC SCC was involved in the co-arrangements and recruited speakers from UBC member cities.

May 16-18 2017 – UBC Sustainable Cities Commission meeting in Jyväskylä, Finland focusing on circular economy in cities. There was a web streaming of the meeting organised by the commission.

During June 7-8 2017 IWAMA Capacity Development Workshop “Energy efficiency in Waste Water Treatment” was organised in Szczecin, Poland. This event was limited to project consortium partners only, in total 78 participants attended. During the workshop partners had an opportunity to present selected case studies of waste water treatment plans from their cities as well as to discuss and brainstorm on the issues of capacity development, energy efficiency and sludge management in parallel neighbourhood’s sessions.

June 13-14 2017 UBC SCC participated in the 8th Strategy Forum of the EUSBSR in Berlin, Germany. The main theme of the forum was “Connectivity”. UBC SCC organized seminar titled: “Smart Water Sector” in the framework of IWAMA project as a part of the agenda and was presenting UBC related project presentations and key notes in several other workshops.

June 15 2017 - 2nd Baltic Urban Lab Workshop took place in Norrköping, Sweden. The topic of the workshop was “Brownfield regeneration site planning improved with 3D visualization and interactive public participation tools”. Urban planners from UBC cities were invited to learn from practical examples of 3D visualization and interactive participation tools in urban planning in Baltic Urban Lab Workshop II.

September 25-27 2017 – 4th iWater international event in Turku, Finland (closed event for the project partners). The event will focus on the outcomes and deliverables of the storm water management pilot in the partner cities in order to produce the material for dissemination and trainings in other BSR cities.

September 27-29 2017 – CIVITAS Forum 2017 will be held in Torres Vedras, Portugal. UBC SCC will take part in the forum as one of the project partners.

October 18-20 1st SUMP training will take place in Thessaloniki, Greece in the framework of CIVITAS SUMP-UP project. UBC SCC will participate in the training as one of the project partners. The workshop forms part of SUMP Learning Programme 1 and will focus on the topic "SUMP tailored to small- and medium-sized starter cities".

In addition, big number of webinars, project meetings, conferences as well as smaller events within coordinated projects were arranged by UBC SCC during 2015-2017.

3. Projects (only major projects)

1. **CIVITAS DYN@MO** – 2012-2016

Financing: 7th Framework Programme – CIVITAS Initiative; budget: 13 117 112€

Project partners: 6 project partners from Finland, Germany, Poland, Croatia, Spain.

Short description: CIVITAS DYN@MO is an ambitious project bringing together four European cities that have agreed on a mission to strengthen sustainable mobility. DYN@MO is short for the project motto DYNamic citizens @ctive for sustainable Mobility. The participating cities are Aachen (DE), Gdynia (PL), Palma de Mallorca (ES) and Koprivnica (HR). The cities will promote non-polluting lifestyles, collaborate with citizens with new, web-based tools, and implement integrated, innovative transport services for active citizens of all ages. CIVITAS DYN@MO is part of the CIVITAS Initiative, aiming at supporting cities to introduce ambitious transport measures and policies towards sustainable urban mobility.

More information: <http://civitas.eu/content/dynmo>

2. **IWAMA** – 2016-2019

Financing: Baltic Sea Region Interreg Programme 2014-2020; budget: 4 600 000€

Project partners: 17 project partners from Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Finland.

Short description: In municipal waste water treatment (WWT) sector singular solutions are not enough anymore to improve the nutrient removal and meet the stringent HELCOM recommendations. Instead a comprehensive approach to all the processes is necessary, in which case two urgent challenges arise: insufficient sludge management and the need to make processes more energy efficient. Both are directly linked to better nutrient removal results and can be addressed through capacity development activities and small-scale investments.

More information: <http://www.iwama.eu/>

3. **iWater** – 2015-2018

Financing: Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020; budget: 2 350 000€

Project partners: 9 project partners from Finland, Sweden, Latvia.

Short description: Climate change has led to more frequent and intense storm and rainfall events along with increased flooding, storm water runoff, and soil erosion. These are forcing planners and storm water specialists to develop strategies dealing with greater volume and

velocity of storm water. At the same time, urban areas are densifying and land is more covered with sealed surfaces. As the Baltic Sea region is estimated to face more frequent and heavier rainfalls, the current planning and management practices have proven to be weak in meeting these challenges. Thus, the project idea is to create higher quality, cleaner and safer urban environment and increase urban sustainability.

More information: <http://www.integratedstormwater.eu/>

4. **CIVITAS Eccentric – 2016-2020**

Financing: 7th Framework Programme - CIVITAS Initiative; budget: 19 307 741€

Project partners: 28 Project partners from Finland, Sweden, Germany, Bulgaria and Spain.

Short description: Within CIVITAS ECCENTRIC, the cities of Madrid, Stockholm, Munich, Turku and Ruse are working together to tackle the challenges of mobility in suburban districts and clean, silent and CO2 free city logistics, two important areas that have previously received less attention in urban mobility policies. European cities have created liveable and attractive city centres, but a remaining conflict exists between providing high quality public space and meeting the accessibility requirements for freight deliveries. Also, higher car usage in suburban areas has previously been largely unaddressed. To curb this situation, CIVITAS ECCENTRIC will demonstrate in five living laboratory areas the potential and replicability of integrated and inclusive urban planning approaches, innovative policies and emerging technologies. Through a total of 50 measures, bundled in 6 thematic work packages, clean vehicles and fuels will be tested, new regulations and services formulated and consolidation solutions developed in close partnerships with the private sector. This will contribute to meeting the targets of the Transport White Paper in terms of air quality, energy use and road casualties and to reach CO2 free city logistics by 2030. More information: <http://civitas.eu/eccentric>

5. **SUMPs UP – 2016-2020**

Financing: 7th Framework Programme - CIVITAS Initiative; budget: 3 742 998€

Project partners: 15 project partners from Germany, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, France, Italy, Spain, Hungary, United Kingdom, Greece.

Short description: The need for more sustainable and integrative planning processes has been widely recognised. CIVITAS SUMPs-Up promotes and supports a broad take-up of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) especially in regions and cities where the take up is so far low. A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan has an integrated approach and fosters the development of all relevant transport modes while encouraging a shift toward more sustainable modes. As a result, by the end of the project 30 cities are expected to prepare SUMP ready for adoption.

More information: <http://www.eltis.org/mobility-plans/project-partners/civitas-sumps>

6. **Baltic Urban Lab – 2015-2018**

Financing: Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020; budget: 2 200 000€

Project partners: 7 project partners from Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia.

Short description: Baltic Urban Lab tackles an increasing need to build attractive, high-quality and sustainable urban areas that is a common challenge for all Central Baltic cities. The project identifies and promotes already existing good practices on brownfield regeneration and facilitates exchange of experiences between planners and experts in the Central Baltic region.

New planning tools and models promoting integrated management and co-creative urban planning are developed and tested on selected brownfield sites in the four project cities - Riga, Tallinn, Turku and Norrköping. The project aims for more inclusive urban planning encouraging the participation of different societal groups including citizens, NGOs, land owners, developers, businesses and other stakeholders in the planning process and maximize the use of knowledge and resources of different parties for the development of high quality living and working environment. More information: <http://www.balticurbanlab.eu/>

7. **Carpe Essence** – 2014-2017

Financing: Erasmus+ KA2 – Cooperation and Innovation for Good Practices; budget: 467 569€

Project partners: 8 project partners from the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, The UK, Germany.

Short description: Over the last decades important geographical, demographical and environmental changes have taken place in the urban environment. The rate of urbanization increases rapidly, urban population is increasingly aging and environmental pressures in especially urban areas are growing. The need for a transition towards more sustainable cities requires a reinforcement of academic programs that educate professionals able to develop viable solutions for smart sustainable cities. The knowledge and expertise of HEI's on societal challenges will improve the quality of possible solutions with impact on regional societies, as a result of the cooperation between universities and local municipalities. The project aims at developing a joint international course on creating sustainable cities, involving HEIs and regional authorities and to disseminate parts as open course to be used and to set an example for other regions. Project will investigate, exchange, and test best practices of innovative teaching approaches, blended learning, distance learning, flipped classroom and ICT methods, and to implement those in a joint course (30 ECTS) on creating sustainable cities.

More information: <https://husite.nl/essence/>

8. **Skanssi – Open Innovation Platforms** – 2015-2018

Financing: European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, the Finnish Government and the City of Turku; budget: 1 282 434€

Project partners: 8 project partners including UBC cities

Short description: In the Six City Strategy's Open innovation platforms spearhead project, the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere, Turku and Oulu combine their innovation and development environments into a network of open innovation platforms. The aim of this network is to strengthen Finland's competitiveness by facilitating the creation of new expertise, business and jobs in the service sector. The national network of open innovation platforms built in the spearhead project provides companies, research organisations and other target groups with a "one-stop" development environment for products, solutions and services. The Skanssi project was started to create a smart and sustainable residential area in Turku as part of Turku's aim to become carbon neutral by 2040.

More information <https://6aika.fi/in-english/> (briefly in English)

9. **Cities.multimodal** – October 2017-2020

Financing: Baltic Sea Region Interreg Programme 2014-2020; budget: 3 796 750€

Project partners: Lead partner – Hansaetic City of Rostock (DE) + 16 project partners from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Russia + 34 Associated partners.

Short description: Many cities throughout the BSR struggle with high inner-city traffic volumes causing severe congestion, poor air quality, noise and high CO2 emissions. Moreover, this reduces the accessibility, puts road safety at risk, increases health problems and reduces quality of life. Multimodal transport and travel – the choice and combination of sustainable transport modes like walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing - as alternative to individual car use are main solutions to tackle these problems. Multimodal transport and travel are still underdeveloped in most cities, and are neither on the agenda of politicians nor being implemented by urban and transport planners. Only a few forerunner cities have already applied sustainable urban mobility planning (SUMP) and mobility management. The project aims at developing and applying a low-threshold approach for environmentally friendly urban mobility, attractive and easy to adopt for follower cities. The project focuses on dense inner-city areas with growing population and mixed use, offering good opportunities for sustainable mobility. They are forerunners for other urban districts and cities in the BSR, but due to limited space and too many cars they need a switch from car oriented traffic planning to sustainable urban mobility planning. The project is in initial phase. More info to come later.

Summary on UBC SCC projects: The UBC SCC has a reputation for being highly requested to participate in EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region activities and is also enjoying a good reputation as a good project management partner. During 2016 – 2017 the UBC SCC have participated in EU funding programme trainings, consultations in the Baltic Sea Region and Brussels to present the Baltic Sea Region and UBC. The success rate of UBC SCC applications have steadily been raised and is now around 90 %.

4. Cooperation with other organisations

During 2015-2017, the UBC SCC continues active cooperation with various important stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region.

One of the main guiding strategies for the work of UBC SCC is the EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). EUSBSR coordinates the activities to promote a more balanced development of the region. The UBC SCC has received EUSBSR Flagship status for two UBC coordinated projects:

- The iWater project received EUSBSR HA Climate Flagship status. The flagship status is a recognition for the iWater's work for transnational cooperation within urban planning and integrated storm water management. The iWater project was noted and presented as a successful project in Europe by DG Clima in the United Nations COP 22 meeting in Marrakech Morocco December 2016. Furthermore the Project was similarly presented as an example of good local activity in the UN Civil Security conference in May 2017 in Istanbul.

- The IWAMA project received EUSBSR PA Nutri Flagship status. As part of the work towards cleaner Baltic Sea the Policy Area Nutri (PA Nutri) promotes projects with specific goals corresponding to policy area Nutri actions supporting the reduction of nutrient loads to the sea.

The strategic cooperation of the UBC – CDP is based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the UBC Executive board in November 2016. CDP is the world’s leading organization on voluntary Climate reporting. CDP provides the world’s only global natural capital disclosure system. Currently over 500 cities, 100 states and regions, and more than 5500 companies – representing 81% of the global 500 and over 50% of the market capitalization of the world’s largest 30 stock exchanges – use the system to report, share and take action on climate change every year. In January 2017 UBC started the two year strategic cooperation with the leading climate reporting organisation CDP. UBC and CDP aim to increase the number of Baltic Sea Region cities using systematic reporting of their climate change related actions from 6 UBC cities to 25 UBC member cities in 2017 and in 2018 to 50 UBC member cities. In 2017 20 UBC member cities reported to the Climate reporting and in addition 32 cities in northern Europe decided to do so based on UBC SCC marketing.

Furthermore, Sustainable Cities Commission is in a close cooperation with Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission known as HELCOM. UBC SCC has an observatory status with the body and contributes to the matters dealt with by HELCOM.

UBC SCC has also a well-established cooperation with VASAB – inter-governmental multilateral cooperation of 11 Baltic Sea Region states. Together we are working on sustainability matters on both local (UBC) and transnational level (VASAB) across wide array of activities, such as environment, transport, education, culture, tourism, business development, youth issues, gender equality as well as urban planning.

In the framework of the CBSS – Baltic2030 Action Plan UBC Sustainable Cities Commission is a member of the expert group on sustainable development. Organisations lead close cooperation related to management of projects, event planning and mutual support.

Last, but not least, UBC SCC constantly cooperates with multiple public organisations (EU Commission, DG REGIO, DG Clima, and other relevant stakeholders in the region while implementing various projects.

5. Communications

UBC SCC has been putting particular effort on strengthening its visibility and improving its communication strategy for the Commission as well as the whole UBC. An important goal has been to simplify the communication methods between the UBC members and gradually involve more into electronic means of communication. With the newly acquired online streaming equipment, the plan is to facilitate growing number of meetings and conferences complemented with real time web broadcast. Moreover, part of the physical internal UBC meetings is sought to be held online instead.

During 2015-2017 UBC Sustainable Cities Commission continued to publish its online Bulletin. Sustainability Bulletin is published on the UBC SCC website and includes updates from the Commission and the secretariat, projects and events. The next UBC Sustainability Bulletin is expected to be published in the end of autumn 2017. In addition, in 2017 the UBC SCC took part in the compilation of the UBC Spring 2017 Bulletin themed "Sustainable and Climate-smart Baltic Sea Region Cities". Apart from managing UBC SCC Commission's main web page, communication team of the UBC SCC also develops and maintains web pages of the ongoing projects coordinated by the UBC Sustainable Cities Commission.

The UBC Good Practice Database has been an operative database of good practises in the BSR. During 2017 - 2018 there is a need to further develop the database in order to better serve UBC cities, collect information, data, good practises etc. from projects, meetings and UBC member cities. The intention is to develop the Good practice database with a new structure and information. As part of this a UBC Sustainability survey will be planned in 2017 and carried out in 2018.

UBC SCC plays a great role in the co-operation between UBC and CDP 2016 – 2017. The Commission is coordinating the communication activities and is responsible for the content producing and visual layout of the joint report to be published in the General Conference in Växjö.

Statistics on social media coverage

UBC SCC is active in various communication channels on a day-to-day basis, providing coverage of the events, spreading awareness, promoting the Sustainable Cities Commission and the UBC in general. As of 2017, the UBC SCC is present on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube as well as LinkedIn (back-to-back with the main Secretariat of UBC).

Due to consistency in social media postings and scheduling, our Facebook page gained 41% more popularity during 2016-2017 (from 322 Facebook fans in October 2016 to 544 in September 2017) with the highest engagement rate of 22816 persons reached in April-June 2017.

The Twitter page gained 18,22% more fans (988 followers as of September 2017) during this period. According to Facebook statistics, our fans are mainly 25-44 year olds and come from Finland, Lithuania, Sweden, Latvia, Germany, Estonia etc. The Instagram account 'UBC Sustainable' has been launched in March 2017. UBC SCC recently reached 1000 followers in Twitter.

For purpose of improving our visibility in social media, in March 2016 UBC SCC communication team planned and executed paid promotion campaign targeted at the UBC member states and biggest cities

in the region. The campaign turned out to be successful, reaching multiple Facebook users and helped to define important trends and directions for future improvements of our social media communication channels.

6. Other activities

The UBC SCC has been involved in the preparations and recruitment to the Baltic Leadership Programme on Agenda 2030 (2017 – 2018). The UBC SCC has recruited participants from UBC member cities and will also participate in the planning of the training material.

Summary 2015 – 2017:

Approximately 10 large scale projects with a total budget on 50 million euros. More than 40 UBC member cities operatively involved in UBC SCC lead projects. All UBC member cities been contacted with newsletters, meeting invitations and surveys. Arranged or co-arrangement in more than 20 large scale conferences. Increasing number of followers of UBC activities via social media.

Björn Grönholm

22.09.2017