



To the

Seed Money Facility
EU Strategy for the
Baltic Sea Region

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SEED MONEY PROJECT

Project title: Baltic Sea Region Urban Forum for Smart Cities – BUF

Lead Partner: Tartu Smart City Lab representing the Union of Baltic Cities UBC

The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) has given a new, strong impetus for fruitful and goal-oriented cooperation around the Baltic Sea. The concept of multi-level governance, which brings together various stakeholders both horizontally and vertically, can help to bring together organisations and networks and break “silos”, which prevent innovation and successful action. The MLF concept, if further developed, can multiply regional efforts for the common goals defined in the EUSBSR.

UBC, the largest, best organized and most influential organization of local authorities around the BSR, brings together more than 100 membership-fee paying cities from all countries of the region, including Russian Federation and Norway. It has for over 20 years been working for the interests of the region, and has a proud track record.

UBC, together with the Baltic Development Forum, another key BSR organization which reaches out to more than 7 000 decision makers from all over the region and beyond, have during last years strengthened their mutual cooperation, also thanks to the EUSBSR.

Now this strong and unique consortium has agreed to work for establishment of a Baltic Sea Region Urban Forum for Smart Cities. The objective of the Forum is to form a broad network with participation of cities and towns that will effectively address challenges and realize opportunities for making green transition towards sustainable societies. The cities play a crucial role in this.

By bringing together cities, their policy makers and public and private innovation and green economy practitioners and experts from all countries around the Baltic Sea, it is in itself an innovation with far-reaching potential. It will bring together public authorities, private companies and citizens organisations in a goal-oriented way – create a new pan-Baltic PPP involving not only EU member countries but also Norway, Russia and potentially other neighbours. It is also a good example about how the concept of MLG can get things done.

The Executive Board of the UBC has, on several occasions discussed this process of creating a Baltic Sea Region Urban Forum for Smart Cities. Board members representing cities such as Gdańsk, Jyväskylä, Keila, Kolding, Kristiansand, Liepāja, Naestved, Rakvere, Šiauliai, Rostock, Turku, St. Petersburg and Umeå have unanimously supported the process of preparing the Urban Forum together with BDF. Several other member cities such as Riga have expressed their interest in promoting the Smart City concept, which would undoubtedly be able to attract wide participation.

On behalf of the UBC, its Board and Member Cities, I express my full and active support to this application for Seed Money to develop a Baltic Sea Forum for Smart Cities.

Per Bødker Andersen
President