

UBC Strategy implementation – summary of answers

Questions and request to member cities

- Have you practiced expert exchange between your city and other cities? With which cities, when and how many persons have participated? How long have the experts stayed in the other city?

Gargzdai

We didn't participated in specific (concrete) experience exchange programme between cities, but I believe that every visit to another countries' institution is like a small exchange of experience. Because you visit people, who introduce you to their system, shows how work is done and etc. Thus we visited Ilawa in Poland, Ronneby in Sweden, Zelenogradsk in Kaliningrad.

Gdynia

The City of Gdynia has practised expert exchanges between our city and twin cities. The exchange was organised with the cities: Aalborg (Denmark), Kaliningrad (Russia), Karlskrona (Sweden), Kiel (Germany), Klaipeda (Lithuania) , Kristiansand (Norway).

We also organised study visits of self-governments' representatives and non-governmental organisations from Belarus, the Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Georgia - these visits were financed within the projects managed by the visiting organisations, City Hall of Gdynia helped to organise the programme of stay in Gdynia.

All the visits were organised in the years 2001-2010.

The number of people participating in a particular visit varied from 2 to 4 people.

Usually a typical visit lasted two days:

1st day - arrival in the afternoon

2nd day - study visits

3rd day - study visits

4th day – departure

The subjects of the exchanges were: green areas management, accountancy and budget, public transport management, social housing, public utilities management, education, sport, social aid.

Kemi

During the recent years we have had only occasional exchange

Kiel

Since 6 years, we have an exchange of experts between us and a regional savings bank. We do not have an exchange between cities, so far. This could be very interesting for us.

Klaipeda

During the recent 15 years Klaipeda has had several cases of experts' exchanges. They were not numerous in the sense of pure exchanges as such between / among municipal experts. But the best practice experience exchange in many fields of municipal responsibility were incorporated into the framework of a lot of International cooperation projects financed by EU PHARE, INTERREG, etc. that Klaipeda had been a partner /leader of.

Some examples of the cases when the City administration was involved into organizing an exchange were as follows:

- an economist was sent for practice to our twin-city Luebeck, Germany, for the period of half a year, financed by Klaipeda - Luebeck Friendship Association;
- a teacher was sent to our Japanese twin-city Kuji for the period of one year to learn the Japanese language and work in the Mayor's office, the practice was financed by the host city. Having returned from Japan, he teaches the Japanese language and Oriental Culture as a selective subject at Klaipeda University, translates from Japanese, etc.
- three specialists working with delinquent teenagers had experience exchange of 6 weeks in our twin city North Tyneside, Great Britain, financed by the KNOW HOW Fund;

There had been exchanges of doctors (Karlskrona, Sweden, Cleveland, USA), social workers (Karlskrona, Cherepovets, Russia), environment experts (Koege, Denmark, Odessa, Ukraine), culture staff (Bergen, Norway, Gotland, Sweden), writers (Kaliningrad, Russia, Visby, Sweden), politicians (Karlskrona, Vaxjo, Kalmar (Sweden)). The EU has sent an expert from Rotterdam to help implementing a new self-government reform, the Canadian Government, two experts from Halifax City to share best practice in the city administration. Various state institutions, NGOs have had International experience exchanges financed by the sending, hosting party or projects. For International cooperation Klaipeda was awarded Europe Prize 2003. Nevertheless, it should be noted that actually the majority of those „exchanges“ were not pure ones in its full sense. Actually those were just „one way“ - our specialists would go abroad, but only some of them would come for experience to Klaipeda (Russia, the Ukraine). In one or two cases we had used the Town-Twinning Fund. We also know that there have been lots of experience exchanges that the city administration was not involved.

Kristiansand

We (City of Kristiansand) have practiced expert cooperation in a number of projects the latest 2 years. The cooperation takes place in the framework of EEA financial mechanisms in Estonia and Poland.

In Poland we have worked with Opole (a 4 day course and dialogue seminar on capacity building) and with Jaworzna in Poland also within capacity building, competence building. The focus in Jaworzna has been Modern municipality (strengthening local government administration and democracy process) and the cooperation with NGOs and CBOs

(community based organisations). Focus on gender issues/equality and domestic violence. 6 workshops will be held in Jaworzna.

In Estonia we have worked with City of Narva (UBC member) since January 09.

The project title: Strengthening administrative capacity of local governments between Kristiansand and Narva. The focus has been in ICT as tools for better management, youth, city planning, communication, working with NGOs and CBOs, democracy processes.

10 delegations from Narva have visited Kristiansand in 09 and 10. Each study visit include a 2 – 3 day programme prepared by Kristiansand according to plan and members of the delegation. A benchmarking report has been developed as part of the cooperation.

Narva

Yes, we have exchanged specialists from different departments with experts from the cities in Finland (Imatra)- Svyatogorsk (Russia), Poland (Slubitse)- Germany (Frankfurt-am-Oder), Görletz (Germany) – Sgorzelec (Poland), Haparanda (Sweden) – Tornio (Finland) in the frames of the “City Twins” project and as a separate project with specialists from Norway (Kristiansand).

In the “City Twins” project participated 17 people. The average stay was 3-4 days.

In the Kristiansand project there were 40 participants, with the average stay of 3-4 days.

Tampere

There has been only some occasional expert exchanges, for example the Tampere-Mwanza(Tanzania) –project has included some exchanges in a minor scale. The exchanges have lasted for couple of weeks. In the future the exchanges are expected to be longer. Tampere also started a personnel exchange with it’s Chinese twin city, Guangzhou. The exchange just started last spring. A Guangzhou employee was in Tampere for three months. For the time being the application procedure in Tampere is open. The person from Tampere will do the exchange in Guangzhou for three months next spring.

There has been also some other smaller exchanges, e.g in the cultural and museum field. Mostly these exchanges have been realised with our twin cities.

The interest to the Guangzhou exchange has shown that the interest in these kind of exchanges is quite wide among the city personnel in Tampere.

Tartu

- Have you practiced expert exchange between your city and other cities? **Yes.**
- With which cities, when and how many persons have participated? ***First and foremost, with the official twin and partner cities of Tartu, not leaving out other proposals from whatever a city/partner in the world.***
- How long have the experts stayed in the other city? ***It depends, in case of conferences for 2-3 days; in case of study visits for a week or in few cases even longer.***

To map the present situation, actually, quite a lot has been done by UBC already.

We can presently say that, in principle,

- the system and structure to activate the UBS Expert Exchange Programme already exists;
- the executive bodies to make the system more efficient and the relevant structure more functional are already there: Executive Board, Commissions etc;
- the documents (*Cities for a sustainable and prosperous Baltic Sea Region: Union of The Baltic Cities, strategy 2010-2015*; UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010-2015, Agenda for Sustainable Baltic Cities...)to support the respective bodies have already been approved;
- the long-term goal: extensive exchange programme of experts has been formulated;
- the experience of the cities in the field of expert exchange: proposals of the member cities are being expected to be sent to the UBC Secretariat in due course;
- the idea of founding a special task force group of expert exchange programme has been presented to the member cities;
- the questions to the cities for background information to systematize preliminary knowledge in the field of expert exchange have been sent out.

- How has it been organised and funded? Do you funds for such activity in city budget? How have the costs been shared between sending and receiving city? Has the person herself/himself paid any part of the costs?

Gargzdai

Since we don't have such programme (the real one), so we don't have any funding for these activities. Most all our travel are paid by EU structural funds and their projects. Of course not all. Some our trips, especially ones when we visit our partners, are funded from municipalities' budget. But in all cases person who is going doesn't have to pay any part of cost by herself/himself

Gdynia

We had funds in our city budget assigned for organisation of experience exchanges. The costs of visits were shared between the delegating and receiving city; however, sometimes we considered particular cases individually, depending on circumstances. Usually the delegating city paid for the accommodation and the receiving city covered the costs of meals and local transport.

Kemi

The city should pay the costs for the city employee.

Narva

The name of the project was City Twins Cooperation Network (2004-2006) Interreg III C-TACIS. As always, there was a certain amount of self-financing. In this particular project the amount from the local government was 25%. The costs were covered by the project. Participants did not pay for anything.

The Norwegian project “Strengthening the administrative capacity of the local government improvement of the quality of public services via exchange of experience and benchmarking in cooperation between Narva and Kristiansand local government” was supported by a grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. Self-financing was 15%. Participants did not pay for anything as all the expenses were covered by the project.

We also practice visits to our partner-cities to their “city days”, where in addition to the festivities there is also a couple of practical visits or discussions on current issues. These types of visits are funded from the city budget.

Tampere

The funding has been agreed with the sending and receiving city. As the exchanges have been occasional, they have been agreed case by case, so there’s no permanent system for these. In the case of Guangzhou exchange, the receiving city is paying a fee/salary and the apartment. The sending city is paying the travel, insurance & other similar costs. The person herself/himself hasn’t paid any part of the costs.

Tartu

- How has it been organised and funded? ***Basically, it is organised and funded by all the parties involved. In case of special projects travel, accommodation, as well as living costs have been covered by the project funds. Usually, all the local governments involved in the project need to provide their own financial contribution.***
- Do you have funds for such activity in city budget? ***Some of it, yes.***
- How have the costs been shared between sending and receiving city? ***The city sending an expert/student/trainee usually covers travel costs and board. Board can be sometimes covered by the hosting city as well. The hosting city helps to find a hotel with reasonable prices but in few cases, also, covers the accommodation costs itself. In few cases only, all the costs (travel, living, board, accommodation) are covered by the hosting city.***
- Has the person herself/himself paid any part of the costs? ***No, usually not.***

- Have you been seeking/receiving external funding for these exchanges? From which sources?

Gargzdai

Always receiving, from various projects and cross-border programmes.

Kemi

There should be funds available in the Citizens Europe program.

Narva

Interreg IIIIC and grants from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

Tampere

No, only the exchanges being part of e.g. the Tampere-Mwanza –project, have been financed by the project funding.

Tartu

- Have you been seeking/receiving external funding for these exchanges? **Yes.**
- From which sources? ***Different programmes of the Council of Nordic Ministers; Special Study Programmes financed by the Ministry of Finance; the hosting local government or organisation etc.***

- What have been your experiences? Biggest problems?

Gargzdai

Since we have no experience, we don't have any problems. But I guess if we would, the main problem would be language. Because mostly older people can't speak any additional language except Lithuanian and Russian. And of course the most difficult thing would be to convince our politicians that they have to allocate resources for this activity.

Kemi

Activity of the civil servants to apply for these kind of programs could be better.

Narva

The experience was that we exchanged experience in the cross-border area with the twin-cities in the following areas: city management and administration, city planning, social issues, culture and youth, economics and entrepreneurship, promotion.

Biggest problems: differences in the laws in different countries; different types of borders (borders within the EU vs those between the EU and Russia)

Tampere

Mostly the experiences have been positive and encouraging, more exchange possibilities are really needed. The personnel and the whole work community have benefited from the exchanges. Biggest problems might have been e.g. in the Tampere-Mwanza –project, where the cultural differences between the cities and countries are so huge. There might have been some problems because of the weak preparatory work. But we've learned from these

and try to emphasize also the meaning of the preplanning.

Tartu

- What have been your experiences? ***Basically, very good. The hosting parties have done their best to make the most of the situation for a student/expert etc. on the spot.***
- Biggest problems? ***Language skills, financing etc.***

- Do you have proposals about how to organise an exchange programme between UBC member cities?

Gargzdai

At this moment, no ideas. But it would be great if we could get funding from UBC for these exchanges (fro the reason I mentioned above)

Kemi

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Kristiansand

The projects above have partially been funded by the EEA financial mechanisms. In all projects most of the travel and accomodation costs. For Kristiansand we have also put own funds into the projects like own time and for some activities quite substantial. In these projects the civil servant does not pay anything of the costs.

Biggest problems have been the process before the application is sent. Not to be as close in the rocess as we believe we should have been. Projects often too broad in terms of scope. We have no plans, at the moment, to carry on with similar projects. We need to see change in the way this processes take place, and more involvement. A systematic exchange programme within UBC member cities is not a prioritised issue at the moment, this due to many reasons.

Narva

Create focus groups (commissions could be used for that), find out mutual problems that need attention, write projects and ask for financial support from the EU funds and beyond, and exchange experiences with the purpose of solving the burning issues or on the basis of benchmarking, and discovering the existing potential for development.

Tampere

Unfortunately not any concrete proposal, but we would be interested in to get involved in this kind of expert exchange.

Tartu

Referring to the very first passage of the present document we can say that a lot has been done and a lot is there ready already for each and every UBC member city to take advantage of. The question is, how to make the present system and structure of the organisation more effective, what are the restrictions/limits and what might be the means to overcome them? In the two strategic documents mentioned above on p.1 a few ideas have been presented already which, in doubt, should be considered, discussed further and carefully thought over while working out a more clear-cut system for the respective UBC Expert Exchange Programme. It seems that language skills as well as finances might be the weakest links in the whole system. Otherwise, to find people who are in need of training courses abroad or who are motivated to give their own training courses to the people interested might be carried out pretty easily, after which the demand and supply within UBC member city network could be more clearly depicted. After the picture is vivid enough, financial system should/could be thought over and founded. On what bases, this might be one of the topics for a task force group to work with. At present each of the cities is responsible for its own independent training and study courses. With a new UBC Expert Exchange Programme an alternative and more centralised system would be founded. Before founding a task force group, maybe the necessary resources to make the expert exchange more active/efficient are still available within the present frame of UBC already? Nevertheless, the discussions started on the matter are definitely of most importance.

And finally:

- Is your city ready to nominate a person into a task force to prepare this issue? Please send her/his contact information. The task force could start its work in the beginning of 2011 by exchange of e-mails, maybe a videoconference and could meet for example in connection of the Lahti Executive Board 11 March 2011.

Gargzdai

If there's a need, so we will find someone. But firstly, as I told before, we would need to convince politicians for the need of such person.

Gdynia

The contact person to the task force on promoting expert exchanges between member cities as well as to the task force on communications and marketing strategy will be Joanna Leman, Manager of Foreign Relations Dept., Mayor's Office, UBC Commission on Sport Coordinator, Gdynia City Hall, Poland, Al.

Piłsudskiego 52/54, 81-382 Gdynia, Poland, phone: +4858 668 82 07, fax: +4858 668 82 10, e-mail: j.leman@gdynia.pl, ubcsport@gdynia.pl

Kemi

Ms Maria Kynsijärvi is willing to participate the task force marja.kynsijarvi@kemi.fi

Kiel

Wolfgang Schmidt
City of Kiel
Department Head International
Communication, Marketing
and Economic Affairs
City Hall, Room 433
Fleethörn 9
D-24103 Kiel
Phone + 49-431/901-2473
Fax + 49-431/901-742473
Mobile + 49-15127751024
wolfgang.schmidt@kiel.de

Kristiansand

As stated above. Not at the moment.

Narva

To nominate a person might be problematic at this point by we can suggest someone from the Department for Economy and Development at the Municipality of Narva

Tampere

Yes, contact person: Ms Satu Vuorinen, head of international affairs
Email satu.vuorinen@tampere.fi
Phone +358 3 565 66931, +358 40 5388402

Tartu

Ms Sirje Bork, Head of Foreign Relations and Protocol Service, Department of Public Relations, Tartu City Government; ph +372 7 361 182, mob.+372 51 08 169, Sirje.Bork@raad.tartu.ee; Jaani 7, 51007 Tartu, ESTONIA.

B: Raising of public profile and visibility of UBC – Communications and Marketing Strategy**Request to member cities:**

- Please nominate a media/marketing professional who would be your city's representative in a task force to prepare the new UBC Communications and Marketing strategy.

Gargzdai

That would be me, Eglė Juozapavičiūtė from strategic planning and investment department (I have BA communication and management).

Kiel

Wolfgang Schmidt
City of Kiel
Department Head International
Communication, Marketing
and Economic Affairs
City Hall, Room 433
Fleethörn 9
D-24103 Kiel
Phone + 49-431/901-2473
Fax + 49-431/901-742473
Mobile + 49-15127751024
wolfgang.schmidt@kiel.de

Kristiansand

Ms Rita Hansen, Head of communication unit in City of Kristiansand.

Narva

Again, we do not have a media/marketing professional inside the local government, but I could try to do it: yjatseslav.konovalov@narva.ee

Tartu

Ms Kairi Ustav, Head of Marketing and Tourism Service, Department of Public Relations, Tartu City Government; ph +372 7 361 104, mob +372 50 77 511, Kairi.Ustav@raad.tartu.ee; Jaani 7, 51007 Tartu, ESTONIA

- Send suggestions and proposals about how to improve UBC`s visibility internally in cities, within the region and in the wider world.

Gargzdai

Better communication (not only working groups, committees and conferences), more high-quality promotion – that`s it for this moment. As I understand, there`s no time for longer consideration.

Kiel

Concept “Cooperation and Partnership: for a strong voice in Europe”

We propose to invite Marcus Andersson as a resource person. Marcus is Head of Public Affairs at Baltic Development Forum and Manager at Communications Agency "Tendensor".

Contact:

Marcus Andersson
Head of Public Affairs
Baltic Development Forum
Nygade 3, 5.
PO box 56
DK-1002 Copenhagen
Denmark
Phone: +45 60 21 85 76
Fax: +45 70 20 93 95
Mail: ma@bdforum.org
Web: www.bdforum.org

Kristiansand

We have contacted the communication/media unit in the municipality. So far we have not received any commitment from them to participate- We will have to notice UBC at a later stage if and when we receive any conclusions.

At the moment this will be negative.

Narva

Internally in the cities: ask contact persons to post information about the news in UBC on the city's webpage, focusing on those news items that are especially relevant to their cities
Suggest that contact persons write an article or two a month in the local press about what's going on in the UBC and their own city's reactions to those activities
Annually reward those who contributed most to promotion of UBC in the member cities

Within the region: Organize more events under the auspices of UBC, make more stationeries, maps, posters, etc. with the logo of UBC

Wider world: Go public, with more articles in the world press, major newspapers. Invite major networks (CNN, BBC) to UBC General Meetings, and some commissions' meetings where decisions on the most important issues in the region are made, e.g. environmental.

Tartu

Few suggestions concerning the practical side of the marketing activities of UBC within the organisation and in the region, in EU and in the wider world are herewith presented:

Within the UBC:

1. Media. Press releases initiated and issued by PR Departments of the member cities concerning the information about UBC events taking place in the city.

2. UBC's presence at tourism fairs of the member cities, if not in person then booklets, souvenirs, different handouts, flyers introducing the organization would be most welcome.
3. The basic information on the UBC webpage could be available in the mother tongue spoken in all ten countries of the member cities surrounding the Baltic Sea.
4. e-information bulletin introducing the member cities' tourist attractions, main events etc.
5. UBC bulletins should be available in tourist information centres/points of the member cities.
6. The UBC Day celebration annually in each of the member cities, whereas the special programmes of the activities could be presented on the UBC webpage as well as on all the UBC member cities' webpages.
7. A map of UBC with the Baltic countries and with all the UBC member cities marked on it could be issued as a poster as well as virtually.
8. UBC could produce its own souvenirs that could be, in case of wish, bought also by the member cities to be used on different occasions. E.g. calendars introducing the Baltic countries and the member cities etc., or a UBC puzzle with UBC cities or the tourist attractions etc on it.
9. On the UBC webpage a quiz connected with UBC topics for all the interested people could be presented. The prizes for the winners could be provided by the member cities themselves (e.g. a 2-3 day visit to a member city with the living costs as well as a cultural programme provided for the winner/s).

In the EU and wider world:

1. Social media. A UBC Facebook account could be opened and the news of the city provided by a specially nominated administrator. A special photo(s) and the address of the webpage of the city would be nice to be found when opening the site. A special entry for discussions would also be most welcome.
2. It would be nice to find the UBC banner on each of the member cities' webpages; or at least a note with basic information (contacts incl) about UBC.
3. What are the possibilities to get extra money for UBC marketing activities from the EU? A film to promote UBC could be produced and distributed and demonstrated by different TV stations within UBC, EU etc.