

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTISE IN BALTIC CITIES AWARD 2005

Report of the Award Committee

The Best Environmental Practice in the Baltic Cities Award is given as an honorary award to one of the UBC member cities. The intention with this award is to encourage member cities to develop their administration and services in innovative ways for the good of the whole municipality and its citizens.

Introduction

Sustainable transport is one of the focus areas in the UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 - Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities. In fact, it is among the most critical issues according to the Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2004/2005. There is a cause for concern, as in many Baltic cities private cars dominate urban transport and public transport is inefficient. Much has been done to support sustainable development in this focus area. UBC EnvCom for example is co-ordinating a large European project, BUSTRIP (Baltic Urban Sustainable Transport Planning and Implementation), which helps cities to develop, prepare and revise sustainable urban transport plans. Additional actions, however, are needed. Union of the Baltic Cities is seeking for best practises promoting Sustainable Urban Transport. To this end, UBC has selected Sustainable Transport and Mobility as the theme for the Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2005. The UBC called for innovative practices, which cities have developed and/or implemented to meet local needs.

Number of applications

The UBC Commission on Environment received best practises applied in 10 cities from five countries. The applicants were: Aalborg (DK), Kaunas (LT), Kristiansand (NO), Kristianstad (SE), Linköping (SE), Malmö (SE), Panevezys (LT), Riga (LV), Šiauliai (LT) and Sundsvall (SE).

Key guidelines for the evaluation (criteria)

The intention is to look for good innovative practices that support local environmental development, not to select the city with the best overall management. This approach secures that all UBC member cities can enter on equal basis: evaluation of good practices is based on the performance and is thus not dependent on size of the city or other similar factors. The applications were evaluated according to the following criteria.

1. Themes

The practice should tackle relevant environmental challenges in the field of transport and mobility.

2. Innovation

The application should demonstrate innovativeness in the overall implementation (for example in the process or technical implementation of the practise) in the field of transport and mobility.

3. Cost effectiveness

The application should also show cost-effectiveness of the practice.

4. Relevancy

The practice should be relevant to the city's current environmental challenges and it should contribute to sustainable development in the city.

5. Time frame

The practise should be implemented after 2001, be on-going and already demonstrable.

6. Quality

The practise should take into account planning and management of the city and it should be transferable to other cities.

Members of the Award Committee

Mr. Carl Nielsen, Director of the Technical Department, Aarhus (DK) (Chairman)

Mr. Mikko Jokinen, Environmental Director, Turku (F)

Mr. Guldbrand Skjönberg, Manager of the Board, Nacka (SE)

Ms. Lisa Sundell, Head of unit Mobility Management, Traffic and Public Transport Authority, Göteborg (SE)

Secretaries of the Committee:

Ms. Anna Granberg and Mr. Kyösti Lempa, Project Co-ordinators, UBC EnvCom Secretariat

General comments

The applications represented three main approaches: promotion of cycling, renewing of the vehicle fleet and integration of different transport systems.

Promotion of cycling was the most popular practice, as six applications promoted cycling in the city in a way or another. Most applications improved cycle pathways, and one of the applicants promoted urban cycling by engaging local celebrities in a cycling marketing campaign.

Modernisation of the vehicle fleet is a key issue in two applications. New fleet will emit less harmful emissions and create less noise. The new fleet will increase travelling convenience, which makes public transport an attractive alternative to the private cars.

Two applications integrated large scale transport systems, trains, busses and trolley busses with small-scale public transport e.g. taxi and minibus. These on-demand transport systems improve efficiency of the public transport. The integration is also an example of functioning public-private partnership, which in long term creates and maintains social capital in the city.

The applications fulfilled general requirements of the Award. They were innovative both in ways to promote cycling in new ways, promoting fossil fuel free transport and encouraging use of public transport through consumer-friendly ticketing systems. The applications were highly relevant in respect to Sustainable Transport and Mobility by increasing use of other modes than private car, reducing harmful emissions and increasing travelling convenience in public transport. These practices are truly sustainable, i.e. they are focusing and improving on environmental, economic and social aspects of urban transport. The practices are in action in the applicant cities, which have allocated considerable amounts of resources to guarantee the durability of the practises.

Conclusion of the Award Committee

The Award committee has unanimously agreed, that the application from **the City of Kaunas, Lithuania, with the practice “Modernisation of the Public Transport Network in Kaunas City” shall be awarded with the Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2005.**

The reasons why the Award Committee has chosen Kaunas and the practice "Modernisation of the public transport network in Kaunas City" are:

- The proposal is exactly in line with the theme Sustainable Transport and Mobility.
- The overall impression of the practice was best in the application of City of Kaunas. For instance, 60% of passengers are choosing the public transport and only 22.5 % are using the private cars. City of Kaunas is an excellent model for any city in the Baltic Sea Region when developing sustainable urban transport system.
- City of Kaunas has allocated considerable amount of resources in an innovative and fruitful way. Investments in trolleybuses and promotion of cycling and walking have beneficial effects, e.g. concentrations of nitrogen oxide in the city centre were reduced by almost 50% between

2001 and 2002. Because of the further investments in transport in 2005-2015, we can expect durability of the process and further reductions in emissions.

- City of Kaunas is promoting sustainable transport model with a mix of actions taking into account environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable development. Joint medium-sized actions will produce a major result, a consumer-friendly public transport system:
 - Improvements in public transport routes according to consumers' needs;
 - Comprehensive ticketing system;
 - Integration of private microbus services into city transport system
 - Successful private-public partnership creates new social capital in the municipality;
 - Improvement of passenger facilities and services in the public transport.

Besides the winning practice the Award Committee wants to comment favourably on the following projects (in alphabetical order)

Aalborg

Aalborg municipality has adopted an action plan for traffic and environment, which has produced concrete results in terms of air quality. The plan includes several projects, for example extension of cycling roads and establishment of a car sharing scheme.

Kristiansand

City of Kristiansand is approaching transport challenges with a wider view, as it is co-operating with national and regional level for a sustainable transport scheme. The city participates to a project, which executes a wide range of activities such as improvement of bus lanes, bus priority in the traffic and enhanced quality of bus stops.

Kristianstad

Kristianstad municipality has a bold vision to become a fossil fuel free city by promoting the use biogas. As a concrete action the city has two biogas production facilities and the produced gas is used for district heating and transport.