

ACTION PLAN 2022 - 2023

UBC Sustainable Cities Commission activities planned for 2022 - 2023

General situation

The UBC Sustainable Cities Commission (UBC SCC) is active in several large scale processes and is operating in different policy-, networking-, and capacity-building activities and development projects.

The UBC SCC is chaired by Co-chairs Dagmara Nagorka-Kmiecik from the City of Gdansk, Per-Arne Nilsson from the City of Malmö and Risto Veivo from the City of Turku and has further strengthened its operations through the work of a dynamic Advisory Board including members from several UBC member cities. The full Advisory Board will be appointed on the 19th October 2021 during the online UBC Sustainable Cities Commission meeting. The Advisory Board will be appointed for the next two-year-period. Most of cities that have been active during the last years will continue and couple of new members expressed their interest to join the Advisory Board work. The Advisory Board assignment is open for all interested UBC member cities.

The UBC SCC focuses on supporting its member cities cooperation and improving the knowledge of cities in the Baltic Sea region towards sustainable development and sustainable development goals both locally, regionally and globally. The UBC Sustainable Cities Commission will continue implementation of environmental and urban sustainability activities within UBC and development and co-ordination of the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2030 closely linked to the global, European and regional policy frameworks i.a. UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, European Green Deal, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The Sustainable Cities Commission also continue co-ordinating the cooperation with CDP by promotion the initiative to gain more member cities joining the disclosure efforts. The Memorandum of Understanding with CDP is renewed every two years based on mutual negotiations and discussions.

The UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2022 - 2030

UBC SCC is developing and coordinating the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2022–2030 together with the UBC Executive Board, UBC Working Groups and other UBC Commissions. The overarching focus in the new UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2030 is on climate actions and the SDGs which are integrated in the five central topics: Water smart cities; Energy smart cities; Resource Efficient cities; Biodiverse cities and Mobility smart cities. Focusing on these five topics, the UBC aims to set an example for the rest of the world on how to become leaders in the battle against climate change, in building a resilient region, and reaching the UN 2030 Agenda.

Several UBC SCC Working Groups meetings, internal and external workshops and actions have taken place to facilitate the Programme preparation and the preparatory process is a

good example of an interactive exchange between the UBC member cities and the UBC SCC secretariat. The new UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2022 – 2030 will be launched at the XVI UBC General Conference on 29th October 2021. A separate document with UBC Sustainable Cities Commission meetings will be presented in the Commission meeting on the 19 October 2021.

EUSBSR implementation

The UBC SCC is strongly involved in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The UBC SCC has been coordinating several projects directly supporting following Policy Areas of the Strategy: PA Nutri, PA Hazards, PA Secure and PA Transport. The EUSBSR strategy goes hand in hand with the new UBC Strategy and the new UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2022–2030 and therefore there has been a lot of synergies and cooperation between both processes. In 2021–2022 UBC SCC will continue to participate in the implementation and close cooperation of the EUSBSR. The UBC is also strongly supporting the organisation of an online EUSBSR Annual Forum 2021.

New EU Funding period 2021 – 2027 and project implementation

Engagement of UBC member cities in international cross-border cooperation will be one of the main goals of the UBC SCC activities. The UBC SCC will also put focus on engaging more cities in the operative activities. The new EU funding period puts focus on the transformation of the EU towards smarter, greener, carbon-free, more connected and closer to citizens Europe. UBC and our member cities will have much to achieve with the goals and tasks of the European Green Deal and other EU sustainability targets. The economic situation puts pressure on investments but one key issue in the upcoming EU budget will be on building on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth decoupled from resource use.

The new EU funding period 2021 – 2027 is about to be finalized and the UBC SCC is planning to be involved in several project applications together with a big number of UBC member cities and other partners from the member cities. Applications with focus on reduction of pollution of the Baltic Sea from nutrients and hazardous substances, sustainable urban mobility, climate budget, energy efficiency in urban real estate and buildings, storm water management, waste water management (reduction of nutrients from rivers and water bodies), environmental monitoring and research of responsibilities of local authorities in the Baltic Sea Region are in different phases of preparation.

The UBC SCC is ready to support the UBC member cities with expertise and recommendations for the upcoming project funding period. This UBC member support has widely been used and has proven to be really useful for many UBC cities.

Strong focus on supporting UBC Cities with UN SDG's

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are in focus for many cities globally, and also in Europe and the Baltic Sea Region. In some countries there are national coordination efforts concerning the implementation of the SDG's but in many there is no coordination.

The UBC and the UBC SCC will within the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016 – 2021 take actions and support the UBC member cities in the coordination and the implementation work with the SDGs. Good models and experiences with the SDG work do already exist in the BSR and we will work to further support cooperation and capacity building in order to reach a higher level of sustainability and ultimately the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations.

Meetings and events

EU Policy co-operation sustainable development and Global activity

In line with the working principles of the UBC, UBC SCC has also contributed strongly to Baltic Sea Regional and European policy co-operation processes on cities' regional governance and sustainable urban development. The commission is representing the UBC at the CBSS/ Baltic 2030 -Expert Group on Sustainable Development.

UBC SCC is also an observer of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM). Through successful project management the UBC SCC has received Flagship status for several projects and processes (IWAMA, iWater, BSR WATER, CASCADE). High level status and visibility of UBC work is important for recognition of the high level of ambition among UBC member cities.

The close cooperation with these organizations as well as other similar organizations such as BSSSC, VASAB, Nordregio, Nordic Council of Ministers and Baltic University Programme, ICLEI, Eurocities and Green City Accord will continue to take place in 2021 and 2022.

With the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2022–2030 there is also a clear intention to strengthen the activity on the global arena. This can be done in close cooperation with the UBC member cities and our strategic partner organizations.

The cooperation with CDP, based on fruitful cooperation since 2017, will be continued in 2022–2023, with a large scale campaign where UBC or UBC SCC promotes the CDP benchmark tool for Climate smart actions in UBC cities.

UBC internal communication and networking activities

As a general and ongoing task are the improvements of our communication activities, with the focus of improving the interaction between UBC member cities and the commission. The annually organized UBC Sustainable Cities Commission meeting works as the main networking event for its member cities.

Several (3 – 4 per year) UBC Sustainability Newsletters will be published in 2022 and 2023. The Bulletin includes updates from the Commission and the secretariat, news from its member cities, updates and news from projects and events. It is sent to UBC SCC contacts and published on the UBC SCC website. The next UBC SC Bulletin will be published in November 2021 after the UBC General Assembly in October. In addition the UBC SCC will continue to use social media as an efficient tool for sharing information about our UBC

member cities, important events and success stories in order to improve the positive picture of UBC and the Baltic Sea Region. The UBC SCC continuously renews and updates the web-pages. Please see www.ubc-sustainable.net

Björn Grönholm - Head of Secretariat, UBC – Sustainable Cities Commission