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Council of the Baltic Sea States Strategy on Sustainable Development 2010-2015

Actions for CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21

Our commitment to sustainable development is about ensuring prosperous economies, healthy societies and dynamic ecosystems in a balanced and integrated manner. The Baltic Sea Region has a long-term vision of sustainable development and the goal of transforming into the world's first Eco-region. With this we mean a region where ecology and economy work together in a balanced and integrated manner to sustain societies and culture.

Text box: What is sustainable development?

The concept of sustainable development reconciles economic, environmental and social objectives (including gender equality and cultural heritage). In practice, sustainable development requires a high level of cooperation across sectors and disciplines. Open and transparent decision-making and participatory processes are key components of the concept. The most widely-referenced definition of sustainable development is the one introduced by the World Commission on Environment and Development (also known as the Brundtland Commission) in 1987: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The region's steadfast commitment to sustainability has produced a strong track record when it comes to sustainable development in both principle and practice. Throughout the region, a wide variety of sustainability good practices have been adopted at national, sub-regional and local levels. Many of these have become global models, and have been adopted by other regions as well. These range from innovations in clean technology to sustainable transportation systems and from Baltic landscapes networks to sustainability education packages. The region also has an extraordinary capacity for research and development, which permits it to generate cutting-edge sustainable development solutions on a continuous basis.

There are many challenges to sustainability today in the Baltic Sea Region, as there are throughout the world. Some of the greatest challenges include the growing demand for energy, climate change, demographic shifts, insufficient sustainability in the use of natural resources both in the Sea and on land, the pollution of the sea itself from industrial and agricultural run-off, as well as limited instruments to support education for sustainable development and life-long learning.

In recent years, action on sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region has become significantly more coordinated. In 2009, the European Union adopted a Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. In 2007, the Helsinki Commission renewed its Action Plan on the Baltic Sea, and in that same year the Council of the Baltic Sea States started its reform process to address long-term priorities of environment, economic development, energy, education and culture, as well as civil security and human dimension. These actions have advanced the concept and practice of sustainable development in our Region.

The *CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21*, with its multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral approach to sustainability, has an important role to play by creating partnerships

and facilitating actions that will enable the Baltic Sea Region to take tangible steps towards sustainable development.

In the years 2010 to 2015 the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and its *Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21* will tackle these challenges by focusing on four strategic areas of cooperation:

- 1. *Climate change***
- 2. *Sustainable urban and rural development***
- 3. *Sustainable consumption and production***
- 4. *Innovation and education for sustainable development***

The CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development - Baltic 21 provides a policy and project platform in the Baltic Sea Region. On the policy side, it regularly contributes to CBSS and the relevant work of the European Union, including the aim of being one of the catalysts of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. In addition to the European Union, the Expert Group seeks to provide input to other policy arenas such as the Northern Dimension Partnership, OECD and United Nations, in particular the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, as well as Rio +20 conference in 2012.

On the project side, Baltic 21 awards a number of region wide initiatives the quality label – the Baltic 21 Lighthouse Project. The Lighthouse Projects are our most visible tool for demonstrating sustainable development in practice. Lighthouse Projects must conform to a set of criteria that is specifically focused on providing a value-added contribution to regional sustainability, as well as high visibility. Many of these projects, and several other activities outlined in this Strategy, are also mentioned as flagship projects in the Action Plan accompanying the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Many of our Lighthouse Projects have been successful in securing funds from EU and its Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. We expect therefore to continue to make similar constructive inputs, in terms of both policy and project development, during the program period following this one (2014-2020).

In the future, we intend to work together with a growing number of partners in realizing the actions outlined in the CBSS Sustainable Development Strategy 2010-2015. The Strategy is building on the comparative advantage of the members of the Expert Group and its on-going and planned Lighthouse projects. The CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21 will monitor the progress of the implementation of the Strategy at its regular meetings. However, the Expert Group will seek to involve and work closely with other relevant Expert Groups and bodies within the CBSS, including the Expert Group on Maritime Policy. It is envisaged that a detailed programme of work, including a more detailed division of responsibilities and financial allocations will accompany this Strategy. The implementation of this Strategy will be assessed in 2015.

Climate Change

Goal: Become a low carbon and climate resilient region

Objective: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to change

The Baltic Sea Region has been experiencing increased effects of climate change since the middle of the last century. According to International Panel for Climate Change a total increase in the average temperature of 3 to 4° C is expected by the end of this century if no further mitigation measures are carried out. This temperature increase may result in the shrinking of winter periods, and a decrease in their severity, thinner icecaps, as well as drier summers and a decrease in the salinity of seawater in the Baltic Sea. Moreover, an increase in the annual precipitation rate and an influx of new species from other parts of the world, such as diseases and pathogens, are examples of the kinds of transformation that the Baltic Sea Region is already experiencing, and will be experiencing even more intensively in the years to come.

In responding to climate change, we need to work both on mitigation measures, the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, and on strategies to adapt to the changes that are being experienced as well as those that are foreseen. Our region has a great potential for innovations in renewable energy by using the sea, wind and biomass, which can reduce our dependency on fossil fuel. Moreover, there are several national, regional and local initiatives under way that are proactive and that aim to develop climate change adaptation strategies.

The specific role of the CBSS Expert Group Baltic 21 in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and adapting to climate change in the region is through projects, both on-going and new, as well as other activities to:

1. Promote climate-smart agriculture and forestry

Agriculture and forestry are part of the solution to climate change. Good practices will be gathered on climate-smart agriculture and forestry to help these sectors tackle climate change. This will mainly be done through projects such as EcoRegion and Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Agriculture.

2. Promote the sustainable production and use of bioenergy

There are vast biomass resources at hand in the Baltic Sea Region and only a fraction of these are utilized. The use and production of bioenergy has to be sustainable and the competition between primary product for food, fodder, fiber and fuel must be balanced. Sustainable and increased production of biomass for different purposes in our region will be promoted. This will mainly be done through the Bioenergy Promotion Project.

3. Address climate change adaptation

Climate Change adaptation will be important at all levels, in particular at the local and regional level where the actual adaptation has to take place. Commonalities in the adaptation strategies at different levels in the Baltic Sea Region will be identified, and a common platform for the development of a Baltic Sea Region Climate Change Adaptation Strategy will be provided as an important policy framework to help the region increase its readiness to climate change. Such a Strategy was called for by the Action Plan accompanying the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. This will mainly be done through the BALTADAPT project.

Sustainable Urban and Rural Development

Goal: A region of sustainable cities and towns in symbiosis with vibrant rural landscapes

Objective: Improve quality of life in both urban and rural settings, and strengthen urban-rural linkages

The majority of people in the Baltic Sea Region live in small and medium size cities and towns, or in rural areas in close proximity to towns. Only a handful of larger metropolitan areas exist in our region. The Baltic Sea Region is also characterized by vast remote areas, which lie mainly in the North.

Both smaller cities and urban regions are the drivers of economic development and prosperity. Cities are the transport hubs that link the entire region together. The interactions between cities and surrounding rural areas can be mutually supportive if there are positive partnerships that can capture the full benefits for both urban and rural areas. Farming and forestry remain crucial in the rural areas and sustainable tourism can be seen as a potential growth area providing a platform for economic diversification in rural communities. There are some negative external effects from the general strong urbanization trend. Thus, there may be good reasons for giving public support to rural areas that are strongly affected by urbanization.

The specific role of the CBSS Expert Group Baltic 21 in improving quality of life in both urban and rural areas as well as strengthening the urban-rural linkages in the Baltic Sea Region is through projects, both on-going and new, as well as other activities to:

1. Promote better management of urban-rural interactions

Municipalities and sub-regions in the Baltic Sea Region have an important role in promoting the quality of life of the people living in the Baltic Sea Region and can contribute to the change in the current demographic trends that have negative effect on sustainable development. Lots of different interactions between urban, suburban and rural areas exist which calls for better management of urban-rural linkages. Efforts to improve the management of urban-rural interactions by the production of a handbook on the concept of quality of life, management plans for urban-rural interactions in a number of city-regions as well as to gather and develop good examples and pilot actions around the region will be supported and implemented. This will mainly be done through the projects NEW BRIDGES and EcoRegion.

2. Promote initiatives on integrated management of natural resources

Forested and agricultural landscapes are currently being used more intensively than ever before. In some BSR countries this development is happening without sufficient cooperation and coordination among relevant stakeholders, leading to conflicts and to unsustainable use of the resources. Initiatives to support integrated management of natural resources will be created, and thereby contribute to sustainable forest management and sustainable agricultural practices (including reduction or ban of GMO use in agriculture, promotion of organic and sustainable conventional agriculture). This will mainly be done by projects such as Baltic Landscapes, Ecosystem Heath and Sustainable Agriculture and EcoRegion, as well as initiatives by the Baltic 21 Agriculture Sector Network.

3. Develop strategies for sustainable tourism

Our region has valuable natural and cultural heritage and landscapes and their potential shall be used in a sustainable manner that allows for economic profit meanwhile keeping it available for the next generations. Efforts to develop strategies for sustainable tourism will be supported. This will mainly be done by projects such as AGORA 2.0 and EcoRegion lead by the Tourism Sector Network. This action is mentioned as a flagship project in the Action accompanying the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Lead partner is the Baltic 21 Tourism Sector coordinator, University of Greifswald, Institute of Geography.

Sustainable Consumption and Production

Goal: Reduce the ecological impact by the average citizen in our region

Objectives: Promote sustainable lifestyles and the development of green economies

Our patterns of consumption and production in the Baltic Sea Region are far from sustainable. Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) takes a holistic view on our lifestyles, structure of economies and methods of production. SCP integrates separate environmental and social problems into the overall framework of consumption and production patterns and identifies solutions to achieve changes to these patterns to decrease our environmental impacts and increase quality of life. SCP are currently addressed at many different levels at the national level, many countries have prepared SCP plans. At the EU level there is the EU Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan and at the global level countries are involved in the Marrakech process and its envisaged 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are important actors in changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production as they constitute a large share of production worldwide. For SMEs, eco-innovations can create competitiveness advantages and new business opportunities that at the same time reduce negative environmental impacts. Special attention needs to be paid to consumer awareness and the active participation of the future user in the development of goods and services. Public authorities constitute a special category of consumers that are key players in facilitating the shift to more sustainable lifestyles of a local community as a whole. Responsible purchasing practices, such as sustainable public procurement, foster demand for goods and services with reduced negative environmental and social impacts within their life cycle as well as can bring a significant contribution to changing behavioural patterns.

The specific role of the CBSS Expert Group Baltic 21 in promoting sustainable lifestyles and the development of green economies is through projects, both on-going and new, as well as other activities to:

1. Support sustainable consumption and production as well as corporate social responsibility programs in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)

SMEs have greater support needs in promoting sustainable production as well as corporate social responsibility compared to large enterprises. Effective mechanisms to assist SMEs in implementing sustainable production practices and corporate social responsibility, in particular within the supply chain, will be devised. This will mainly be done through the SPIN project and new project.

2. Initiate experience-sharing on sustainable public procurement

Local public authorities are often large economic actors on the local markets with many employees and a great demand for energy, goods and services. By using the criteria of sustainability in their purchasing practices, public authorities trigger a growing supply of sustainably produced goods and services. Support to the networking on sustainable public procurement in the Baltic Sea Region will be provided in order to enhance the knowledge and experience sharing. This action is mentioned as a flagship project in the Action accompanying the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Sweden will take the lead on initiating the network.

3. Create enabling environments for youth culture and sustainable lifestyles

Youth is an overlooked resource for sustainable development work in most countries in the Baltic Sea Region. Priority will be given to the development of a project that involves youth groups and organizations, by linking topics such as democracy, youth culture, entrepreneurship and sustainable lifestyles. Focus could be on mutual learning, creative methods and tools. The project could be developed within the framework of the EcoRegion project.

Innovation and Education for Sustainable Development

Goal: Leading region on education for sustainable development and eco-innovations

Objectives: Facilitate the integration of knowledge, skills and competencies for sustainability into education and lifelong learning

The Baltic Sea Region is home for a large number of highly educated people as well as excellent research institutions. To capitalize on that and to strengthen the regional coherence we need to facilitate cross-border mobility and cooperation, as well as intensify knowledge transfer. Knowledge needs to be accessible to all members of society. Key to achieving this is the process known as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which aims to integrate principles and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. Empowering people to make informed decisions and contribute to a society based on sustainable development is vital to ensure the regions sustainability.

Amplifying our region's achievements in ESD, countries and stakeholders need to define how ESD will be structured, where and when it will take place and how to involve more ESD multipliers. Coherent ESD policies need to be implemented at all levels providing more space for critical thinking, creativity and innovation. The Baltic Sea Region is already considered as one of the world's leading regions when it comes to the development of knowledge-intensive products and services, as well as eco-innovations. The challenge is now to make eco-innovations more known and accessible to consumers, as well as more attractive and replicable for entrepreneurs.

The specific role of the CBSS Expert Group Baltic 21 in facilitating the integration of sustainability skills and solutions into education and life-long learning is through projects, both on-going and new, as well as other activities to:

- 1. Promote practical methods of sustainable development teaching enhance cooperation and networking between educational institutions and others**
A number of countries and stakeholders in the BSR are rather advanced in developing and distributing ESD methods. To become truly successful on the regional level a stronger dialogue on both policies and methodologies will be facilitated. This will mainly be done through the BALTIC-SUSTAIN project, the Baltic University Programme and other networking initiatives, including practical use of the learning platform www.sustain.no.
- 2. Facilitate the adoption of Education for Sustainable Development policies in each country and monitor the implementation of these policies**
During the UN Decade of ESD 2005-2014 it is envisaged that countries adopt a national ESD policy. Countries of the BSR have reached different stages in producing such a policy. Policy development wherever necessary will be supported, e.g. by fostering transboundary partnerships and exchanges and by monitoring the implementation of the existing policies. This will be done by the Education Sector Network.
- 3. Support modernization of the industrial base to facilitate the uptake of eco-innovations**
Modern eco-technologies and energy efficiency are integral parts of sustainable development. The existing structure of the industrial production in the Baltic Sea Region should be taken into account while adopting innovative technologies. The current energy system should be complemented by energy saving technologies and the use of

renewable energy sources. Mechanisms and programmes for testing, demonstrating, adapting, marketing and matchmaking to support the uptake of eco-innovations will be provided. This will be mainly done by the SPIN project and new initiatives with special emphasis on eco-innovations in NW Russia.

Partnership for a Sustainable Baltic Sea Region

CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21

The 15th Ministerial Session of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) decided that Baltic 21 should, as of 1 January 2010, become integrated into CBSS and as an Expert Group of the Council.

The overall objective and mission is to continue to contribute actively towards advancing sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region by coordinating goals and activities, and by serving as a forum for cooperation across borders and between stakeholders, as well as by supporting the long-term priorities of the Council.

The key strengths are the multi-stakeholder and integrated approach to sustainable development, both horizontally, involving many different sectors, and vertically, involving many different stakeholders representing a variety of levels of society.

Policy development and dialogue among governments and stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region on sustainable development is an important aspect of the work. However, it is equally important to strengthen practical project development and implementation through promoting Baltic 21 Lighthouse projects. Good practices and lessons learnt on sustainable development need to be spread throughout the region and beyond.

Working closely with other relevant organizations, fostering synergies and building on the comparative advantages that each organization brings, is a cost efficient way of cooperating on sustainable development in the region. The expert group will work closely with the other relevant CBSS Expert Groups, including Maritime Policy, Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation, VASAB - Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Helsinki Commission. The European Union, and the Northern Dimension Partnership, as well as OECD and United Nations, in particular the Rio +20 conference in 2012.

Membership and organisational matters

The Expert Group is responsible for follow-up to the CBSS Sustainable Development Strategy 2010-2015. However, we will work closely with other CBSS Expert Groups and the Committee of Senior Officials to ensure effective implementation of the Strategy.

Our members are government ministries and agencies responsible for Sustainable Development in the 11 Baltic Sea States, the European Commission, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, academic and financial institutions as well as local, city and sector networks.

The Expert Group meets at least twice a year and it reports to the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council. The Chairperson rotates following the established patterns of the Presidency of the Council. The Expert Group is serviced by the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

Text boxes on the Baltic 21 Lighthouse projects that will be inserted into the text where appropriate.

AGORA 2.0 Heritage Tourism for Increased BSR Identity

The project AGORA 2.0 (follow-up to AGORA) aims at close cooperation between tourism stakeholders of the Baltic Sea Region. Partners are public authorities on national and regional level, as well as international NGO and business and heritage organizations, which are all dealing with tourism development and influence national tourism policies. The project aim is to increase BSR identity by heritage tourism (where heritage includes natural and cultural heritage), based on principles of sustainability. This project contributes to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Duration of the project: 3 years, Jan 2010 – Dec 2012

Lead partner: Baltic 21 Tourism Sector Lead Party Germany, University of Greifswald, Institute of Geography

Number of partners: 25 partners from 9 countries

Budget: 2 800 000 € (EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013)

BALTADAPT

The overall objective of BALTADAPT is to contribute to the management of the Baltic Sea as a common resource by providing joint transnational solutions to address the sustainable management of the sea in the context of climate change. More specifically, this project seeks to develop a Baltic Sea Region wide climate change adaptation strategy. As a critical step in the development of the strategy, analyses of the current state of knowledge are required as a basis for preparation of vulnerability and impacts assessments, and identification of measure and research gaps that will need to be filled in coming years.

Duration of the project: 3 years, Sep 2010- Sep 2013)

Lead partner: Danish Metrological Institute

Number of partners: 11 partners from 7 countries

Budget: € 2.858.925 (EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013)

Baltic Sea Bioenergy Promotion Project

The project is acknowledged as a strategic project by the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 Monitoring Committee. The proposal has been designed in co-operation with BASREC.

The project is a platform for cross-sectoral and transnational networking to facilitate information and knowledge exchange, a coordinated policy development and application of bio-energy promotion instruments. The project aims at strengthening the development towards a sustainable, competitive and territorially integrated Baltic Sea Region in the field of sustainable use of bio-energy. One of the main objectives is to assess and optimize the existing policies for sustainable supply and use of biomass originating from different sources and produced for heating and cooling, electricity generation, and as a transport fuel. The project will also address the issue of competition for resources between the use for food, fibre and fuel. Provision of information and knowledge transfer will ensure transparent business possibilities between the countries in the Baltic Sea Region.

Duration of the project: 3 years, Jan 2009- Jan 2012

Lead partner: The Swedish Energy Agency

Number of partners: 33 partners from 10 countries

Budget: 5.062.910 € (EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013)

Baltic Landscapes

The long-term goal of the project is to foster good governance in forested landscapes. These landscapes are facing new challenges caused by i.e. globalization, climate change, demands of both more intensive use of natural resources and enhanced protection, international conventions and recreation development. A network of Baltic Landscapes will be created through the project, functioning as landscape laboratories and neutral platforms for cooperation. A new approach to balance values and interests in natural resources in forested landscapes will be developed and demonstrated in practice with special attention on the European Landscape Convention and the Water Framework Directive. The project will hence produce general agreed approaches towards management as well as proposals for influence on local and national policies and practices.

Duration of the project: 3 years

Lead partner: Swedish Forest Agency

Number of partners: 9 partners from 3 countries

Budget: 3 918 300 €, funding pending

Baltic Marine Litter

The aim of the Baltic Marine Litter Project is to raise awareness of marine litter in the Baltic Sea among policy makers and other relevant stakeholders, to facilitate the harmonization of policies on the issue and to develop potential solutions and best practices. All activities aim at highlighting and visualizing the issue of marine litter among decision makers in the Baltic Sea region. The Fishing for Litter work package aims to contribute to the overall aims of the project by firstly reducing the impact of marine litter on biodiversity, coastal communities and users of the sea by removing it from the marine environment. A transnational network of 15 harbours around the Baltic will be set up. The aim would be to sign up 60 vessels to the scheme and to involve 300 fishermen. Over the period of the project it is expected that 300 tonnes of marine litter would be removed from the marine environment. The marine litter would also be monitored when it is brought ashore to assess the composition, as well as the amount, of litter on the Baltic seabed. This information would be reported to HELCOM.

Secondly the project would raise awareness of the issues with policy makers and within the fishing industry. The project will engage with fishermen and fishermen's organisations that are involved in the project to improve their waste management practices.

Duration of the project: 3 years

Lead partner: Keep Sweden Tidy

Number of partners: 7 partners from 6 countries (Through KIMO Baltic Sea the project will have partners in all BSR countries except Germany)

Budget: 2 800 000 €, funding pending

Baltic Sustain

The project will include activities to modernize study programmes on sustainable development at universities in the Baltic Sea Region. Moreover, the project will help building bridges between universities, municipalities, local authorities and NGOs and provide a platform for know-how transfer in the field of sustainable city planning, renewable energy, redevelopment of former industrial areas ecosystem services including water management and green areas. The partnership is lead by Baltic University Programme Secretariat at Uppsala University and also includes other universities in Hamburg, Vilnius, Tallinn, Riga, Minsk, Åbo and Copenhagen. On

the government and local authority side partners are the cities of Hamburg, Livani, Tallinn, Minsk, Turku and Uppsala.

Duration of the project: 3 years

Lead partner: Baltic University Programme

Number of partners: 17 partners from 9 countries

Budget: 4 849 230 €, funding pending

EcoRegion

The objective is to contribute to develop the Baltic Sea region into the world's first Eco-Region, where economic growth goes hand in hand with environmental integrity and social justice. A number of selected model regions will implement selected sustainable development measures identified with the help of the cyclical sustainable development management scheme, which is still a new approach within Baltic 21. Baltic 21 sectoral networks will be strengthened and action programmes updated. The Baltic 21 sectors' and regions' experience, as well as the Eco Region concept, will be disseminated within and outside of the BSR – with particular emphasis on NW Russia. This project is mentioned as a flagship project in the Action Plan accompanying the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Duration of the project: 3 years, Feb 2009- Dec 2011

Lead partner German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Number of partners: 22 partners from 11 countries

Budget: 2.983.056 € (EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013)

Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Agriculture (EHSA)

EHSA is an educational course package for the Baltic University Programme in cooperation with Envirovet Baltic. The goal is to transfer knowledge through a series of seminars and training courses and develop a new educational package on sustainable agriculture, land use, rural development, ecosystem health and management for teachers, students and people working in government offices, ministries, and municipalities and as agricultural advisors and agricultural managers. The project has a large multiplying effect since when the educational materials are ready they will be used by hundreds of students in all the countries across the BSR including Ukraine and Belarus. The agri-advisory service of EHSA will also be adapted to the local conditions in different countries.

Duration of the project: 12 September 2005 - ongoing with pending completion date

Lead partner: Baltic University Programme

Number of partners: 230 universities from 9 countries

Budget: 600 000 € (SIDA/Urban and the Baltic Sea Unit of SIDA, the Swedish Institute, and the Swedish Environmental Protection Institute)

NEW BRIDGES

Regions and municipalities are the key actors in managing urban-rural interactions and their impacts on quality of life. The New Bridges project aims to improve the management of quality of life through urban-rural planning. The project focuses on individual preferences and future potentials with regard to residential preferences, provision of services, mobility and accessibility. The project will analyse the preferences of different population groups and stakeholders, and develop new working methods and pilot models. By applying the multi-stakeholder involvement principle the project will provide recommendations for the coherent and integrated urban-rural planning.

Duration of the project: 2009-2011

Lead partner: Union of the Baltic Cities

Number of partners: 15 partners from 9 countries

Budget: 3 200 000 € (EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013)

SPIN

Sustainable Production through Innovation in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) project (SPIN) aims at identifying and testing appropriate incentives for SMEs to apply eco-innovations and increase the exploitation of the innovation potential. Company performances can be made substantially more sustainable in terms of environmental, economical and social performance through technical and organisational innovations. This will lead to the creation of public benefits and private profits whilst reducing economic and environmental costs. The project will identify eco-innovational highlights and support their dissemination and deployment. SPIN will reach out to more than 2000 SMEs in the region and assemble a database of best practices. The project will elaborate and test a transnational action plan enhancing the application of eco-innovations throughout the Baltic Sea Region. This project is mentioned as a flagship project in the Action Plan accompanying the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Duration of the project: Feb 2009- Jan 2012

Lead partner: Federal Environment Agency, Germany

Number of partners: 7 partners from 8 countries

Budget: 3 035 000 € (EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013)