

The Baltic 2030 Unit at the CBSS Secretariat received contribution from the Swedish Ministry of Environment and Energy. The contribution was aimed to support the involvement of the civil society representatives from Belarus and North-West Russia to the Baltic Sea region projects on sustainable development.

The following activities were organised with the support of the grant:

### **1. Project “Resilient and Ecological Approaches for Living Sustainably” (REALS+)**

The lead partner of the project was Permaculture Sweden.

The main aim of the project is to create networks and intercultural learning between Sweden, Russia and Belarus, with a focus on socio-ecological resilience and sustainable lifestyle. The project supports the increase of learning, awareness and access to information in relation to sustainable lifestyles, waste reduction and sustainable resource management. The project promotes the generation of the cross-sector and international networks within the theme of sustainable living

The following activities were implemented during the project:

- Exchange Conference on practical experience "Ideas for Resilience", October 16-18th (Minsk, Belarus). The event was organised by the Permaculture Sweden and CEMUS/Ecolibria, Uppsala University and hosted by the NGO Ecohome. The aim of the event was to exchange practical experiences on resilience. The event included study trips and hands on workshops and showed huge interest for questions concerning sustainable living in Belarus. The participants showed great engagement and readiness to create changes for wholesome sustainability in Belarus.
- Seminar "Landscape Planning Tools for Green Economy", 15 October 2015 (Minsk, Belarus). The event was hosted by the Minsk Belarusian Technological University. The objective of the seminar was to introduce the methods and practices on sustainable landscape planning and development of green economy in Belarus, with a view of applying relevant EU experience. 7 discussion sessions were offered consisting of a kick-off talk on the state of affairs in Belarus and in the EU member states. Mr. Alvar Palm from International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics of Lund University was involved an expert on sustainable cities. Also the experts from Kharkiv National University of Municipal Economy, Ukraine and from St Petersburg Scientific Center for Ecological Safety participated at the event.

The project contributed to increased knowledge, oversight and awareness related to the areas of permaculture, land-stewardship, urban design and hands on–practical implementation within civil society in Belarus. It has facilitated and encouraged further discussions on proposals for policy recommendations, as well as highlighted interesting cases. It has also supported ways ahead concerning follow-up activities and possible future joint projects and actions. Most importantly – it has empowered and strengthened civil actors for sustainable development in Belarus and Russia.

The seminars had a networking and educative aim, and new contacts, experiences have been made. The project dissemination will lead to further empowerment in the partner organisations, the civil sector (and beyond) in Belarus and Russia.

### **2. Seminar on competence building on sustainable development and involvement of Belarusian and Russian NGO stakeholders to the BSR.**

The seminar was organized by the CBSS Secretariat`s Baltic2030 Unit on 15-16 December 2015 in Stockholm.

The aim of the meeting was to increase capacity and competence of environmental NGOs from Belarus (and Russia) on development and implementation of successful cooperation projects in the field of sustainable development, to inform the Belarusian and Russian NGOs about the financing possibilities and to establish a deeper contact between the NGOs from these countries which might lead to long-term cooperation for future transnational cooperation projects. The experts of the Swedish Institute, Forum Syd, Baltic Sea Conservation Foundation, SWEDESD Uppsala University, and Swedish Environmental NGOs participated at the meeting to map the joint needs and interests and to discuss about the possible joint projects.

The education for sustainable development, working with value change, social sustainability, finding a common language for sustainable development, biodiversity protection, dissemination of good experiences on sustainable lifestyles were identified as areas of common interest.

The following new project ideas were discussed: a) The role of arts for sustainable development - collaboration with filmmakers, journalists and artists to promote sustainable lifestyles; b) Participatory leadership for sustainable development and resilience; c) Water management; d) Collaboration between the municipalities and NGOs on climate change adaptation; e) Integration of food production and biodiversity; f) sustainable urban planning in Grodno, Belarus.

**3. Involvement of the Belarusian stakeholder to the Conference on Pharmaceuticals in the Baltic sea Environment, organized by the EUSBSR PA Hazards in Copenhagen 15th of December 2015 for facilitating the transnational project development.**

#### **4. CBSS seminar “Green Solutions and Technologies of Success for Sustainable regional and local development of the North West Russia” in Pskov, 21st of December 2015**

The strategic focus of the event was to promote principles for sustainable regional and local development in NW Russia by consolidating key green players and best practices of cross border cooperation and networking for the future Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Programmes' Projects 2014-2020.

28 participants took part in the seminar: NGOs, regional and local governments, academic level as well as experts on CBC 2014-2020.

The seminar has been facilitated by the Leontief Center (St Petersburg) and ANO SKC “PskovRegionInfo”.

The seminar had the agenda consisting of one general plenary session, three creative laboratory modes and final practical session for elaboration of five future project partnerships and project ideas for 2014 – 2020:

- Joint plenary session “Strategic approaches and framework for Successful sustainable local development” with the main goal is to present opportunities for further cooperation in the BSR, to highlight perspective focuses and directions to continue cooperation, to make it wider, wiser, more competitive;

- THE FIRST MODULE - “Developing green infrastructure and clean clusters for sustainable development: wise solutions”, based on the best practices of Pskov and ST Petersburg NGOs in cooperation with BSR partners in the following directions: clean waters, energy efficiency, green approach in municipal service management;

- The SECOND MODULE - “Promoting Greenways and Eco Mobility strategies”, based on St Petersburg , Leningrad Region and Pskov NGOs best CBC practices jointly with Baltic partner - BSR member of the European Greenways Association – EGWA, promoting green tourism cluster , green mobility and transformation of public spaces into smart , accessible , green and attractive;

- The THIRD MODULE – “Urban Rural Partnerships for sustainable development”, presented the experience and planning process for new projects for 2014-2020, promoting the initiative of the NCM’s project “Rural innovations”, cluster approach and networking in sustainable development of the hinterlands and cities.

The final session was dedicated to the experience exchange for future projects, where NGOs, authorities and science as the most sustainable triangle, should be created.

All participants noticed the high practical value of the seminar. As a result, at least five partnerships for project ideas with green solutions in all topics of the seminar were created:

- 1) Via hanseatica plus with Green Hansa Days 2019;
- 2) Common Peipsi region development with activity packages with Rural Innovations (CBC Agronafts);
- 3) Development of tourism with green solutions on the countryside and yacht tourism;
- 4) First Pskov Kremlian Greenway in Pskov to be linked to the European GreenWay network (EGWA);
- 5) CBC palette of energy efficient towns and hinterlands (green eco-solutions using local recourses, threats and perspectives for future development plans).

The concluded that performing that kind of seminars on a regular basis can become the comprehensive tool to demonstrate potential of the cooperation between NGO sector and public authorities for project development and implementation within the frame of variety of Programmes and instruments (when it comes for “green solutions” in field of energy efficiency, alternative energy, innovative “green” approach in tourism development, rural-urban development, fostering the traditional rural entrepreneurship).