

## ACTIVITY REPORT

### UBC SUSTAINABLE CITIES COMMISSION

2019 - 2021

#### 1. General description

UBC Sustainable Cities Commission (UBC SCC), one of the 7 commissions of the Union of the Baltic Cities, is hosted by the City of Turku, Finland. The UBC SCC is responsible for the Union's work on sustainability issues including the coordination of the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021, developing the new Sustainability Action Programme for 2022–2030, and managing numerous projects in the field of urban sustainability. The commission is operating in different policy-, networking-, and capacity-building activities and development projects. However, the most important resource of the commission are the active UBC member cities who contribute with their knowledge, experiences, motivation and strong involvement for the mutual benefit.

The UBC SCC Secretariat, led by Mr Björn Grönholm and a professional staff of 14 persons from Finland, Poland, Germany, Russia, Ukraine and Estonia are coordinating the Commission and Secretariat related tasks. The UBC SCC is steered by three co-chairpersons in close cooperation with the Head of the UBC Secretariat of Sustainable Cities Commission and its Advisory Board. In addition, the work of UBC SCC is totally fully dependent on the interest and need of UBC member cities to propose activities and take a role in our common cooperation.

During 2019-2021, the Chairing board of the UBC SCC consisted of the three Co-chairs: Irena Sakalienė (City of Klaipėda), Per-Arne Nilsson (City of Malmö) and Risto Veivo (City of Turku).

The Advisory Board members of the UBC SCC in 2019-2021 were; Mr. Andres Jaadla (City of Rakvere); Mr Jaanus Tamm (City of Tartu); Ms. Saara Vauramo (City of Lahti); Ms. Sirpa Korte and Mr. Olli-Pekka Mäki (City of Turku); Mr. Steffen Nozon (City of Rostock); Mr. Stephan Braun (City of Greifswald); Ms. Gunita Osite (City of Jelgava); Ms Oksana Dumpe and Mr Guntars Ruskuls (City of Riga); Ms. Dace Liepniece (City of Liepāja); Ms. Dagmara Nagorka-Kmiecik (City of Gdańsk); Mr. Andreas Hedrén (City of Växjö); Ms. Ann Häger and Mr Ola Nord (City of Malmö); Mr Ivan Serebriy (City of St. Petersburg).

The Advisory board has had 4 meetings during the year 2020 and 6 meetings during the year 2021.

In its daily work, UBC SCC staff has been mainly involved in the following activities:

- *Communication tasks*, updating contact databases to UBC member cities, managing web- and social media pages, preparing ebulletins and newsletters, arranging commission and project related meetings and video conferencing facilities.
- *Project management*, preparation of project applications, coordination and participation in the projects.
- *Event planning*, coordinating and co-hosting conferences, workshops, meetings, capacity building activities on request.
- *Benchmarking*, arrangement of benchmarking events, initiating surveys and questionnaires.

- *Organizing trainings* in projects or on request by member cities and online webinars on project related topics.

*Involvement in Policy Development* towards national and EU authorities. UBC SCC has been involved in consultation of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021 – 2027 and sub-regional Programmes. Furthermore, UBC SCC has 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 and BSR Climate Platform. UBC SCC is also an observer of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM). In May 2021 the UBC SCC joined the Green City Accord (GCA) for Clean and Healthy Cities in Europe with the Supporters’ statement. Within the scope of cooperation UBC SCC is supporting cities in joining the GCA movement through awareness raising and communication campaigns, capacity-building activities and expert advise on issues related to water quality and efficiency, enhancing urban biodiversity, reducing air and noise pollution as well as advancing circular economy measures. The cooperation with these organizations as well as other similar organizations such as BSSSC, VASAB, Nordregio, Nordic Council of Ministers and Baltic University Programme continue also beyond 2021.

All in all, during 2019-2021 UBC SCC has been involved in approximately 10 large scale projects, either as a leading partner or as a project partner, with a budget of approximately 30 million euros. In these projects more than 18 UBC cities have been or are involved. At this point, additional 3 projects are in the planning stage.

## 2. Meetings/seminars/conferences

Timeline of the events that UBC SCC participated or organised during 2019-2021. Please note that the events listed are the major ones. UBC SCC have participated in several more events as a unit or within different projects.

Date	Event/Short description/Outcomes
November 2019	Webinar: Integrating SUMP to urban planning, energy and climate strategies
	BEST project workshop on industrial wastewater treatment and Water Hub testing
December 2019	Webinar: Financing and funding options for Sustainable Urban Mobility
	Webinar: Become a HUPMOBILE Follower City
January 2020	Webinar: UBC TALKS about marine litter campaigns
February 2020	CIVITAS ECCENTRIC workshop: How can we increase safety for unprotected road users?
	Webinar: UBC TALKS about Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning!
March 2020	HELCOM Stakeholder Conference
	Webinar: UBC TALKS about best practices in CDP reporting
April 2020	ECCENTRIC webinar: Mobility stations for flexible and sustainable urban transport
	Webinar: UBC TALKS about stormwater management
May 2020	Webinar: UBC TALKS about sustainable and multimodal mobility
	ECCENTRIC Webinar: How cities can promote electrification and electric mobility
	Webinar: UBC TALKS about intelligent transport solution piloting
	CIVITAS webinar: Innovative bicycle sharing approaches
	BSR Electric Virtual Final Conference

July 2020	ECCENTRIC webinar: How to set up an intergenerational project to promote sustainable mobility
September 2020	Baltic Sea Region Mobility Summit 2020
	Webinar: UBC TALKS about local work on SDGs in UBC Cities, part I
	European Urban Mobility Days 2020 - Digital Conference & CIVITAS ECCENTRIC final event
	EUSBSR Workshop on unlocking the nutrient recycling potential
October 2020	CIVITAS Living Labs on stage - discover 16 European cities making better living and moving a reality
	EUSBSR Workshop on reducing security risks related to the climate change
	Virtual 11th EUSBSR Annual Forum 2020
	Webinar: UBC TALKS about local work on SDGs in UBC Cities, part II
	Mobilising Mobility: MaaS - CIVITAS delivers!
November 2020	Webinar: UBC TALKS about water safety from hazardous substances
	ECCENTRIC Thematic Webinar 7: Addressing peripheral neighbourhoods in sustainable urban mobility planning. Lessons Learned from the ECCENTRIC project
	HUPMOBILE online conference
December 2020	Beach wrack in the Bioeconomy – Networking event
	Co-creating urban space – testing the living street concept in the Baltic Sea Region
	Webinar: UBC TALKS about low carbon energy solutions in cities
January 2021	Webinar: Getting the citizens on board – Testing innovative ways of involvement
	European Green Capital Handover and Opening Ceremony
February 2021	Webinar: Breaking bad habits – Increasing multimodality through mobility management
	A clean, productive and shared Baltic Sea – regional and local actions for sustainable future
	Workshop: Pathways to targeted PFAS removal – from policy to technology
	Climate-neutral and resource-efficient water sector – BSR WATER online meeting
March 2021	European Dialogue for Sustainable Cities - "Eco-innovation"
	Webinar: Multimodality made visible – Mobility Points in Baltic Sea Region cities
	International Environmental Forum "Baltic Sea Day" 2021
	Webinar: UBC TALKS about cascading consequences of climate hazards
May 2021	Green City Accord – Online workshop with cities in the Baltic states
	UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2022-2030 - information & consultation event
	HUPMOBILE webinar: Developing ports and their neighbourhood
	HUPMOBILE webinar: Seamless Sustainable Mobility
June 2021	How to make cities more resilient? Results and recommendations from the CASCADE project final conference
	BSR WATER conference "Accelerating the transition to clean and healthy Baltic Sea"
	Q&A Live Session with CDP

### 3. Projects (only major projects)

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1. **CIVITAS ECCENTRIC** – 2016-2020

Financing: 7th Framework Programme - CIVITAS Initiative; budget: 19 307 741€

Project partners: 28 Project partners from Finland, Sweden, Germany, Bulgaria and Spain.

Short description: Within CIVITAS ECCENTRIC, the cities of Madrid, Stockholm, Munich, Turku and Ruse are working together to tackle the challenges of mobility in suburban districts and clean, silent and CO2 free city logistics, two important areas that have previously received less attention in urban mobility policies. European cities have created liveable and attractive city centres, but a remaining conflict exists between providing high quality public space and meeting the accessibility requirements for freight deliveries. Also, higher car usage in suburban areas has previously been largely unaddressed. To curb this situation, CIVITAS ECCENTRIC will demonstrate in five living laboratory areas the potential and replicability of integrated and inclusive urban planning approaches, innovative policies and emerging technologies. Through a total of 50 measures, bundled in 6 thematic work packages, clean vehicles and fuels will be tested, new regulations and services formulated, and consolidation solutions developed in close partnerships with the private sector. This will contribute to meeting the targets of the Transport White Paper in terms of air quality, energy use and road casualties and to reach CO2 free city logistics by 2030. More information: <http://civitas.eu/eccentric>

2. **SUMPs UP** – 2016-2020

Financing: 7th Framework Programme - CIVITAS Initiative; budget: 3 742 998€

Project partners: 15 project partners from Germany, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, France, Italy, Spain, Hungary, United Kingdom, Greece.

Short description: The need for more sustainable and integrative planning processes has been widely recognised. CIVITAS SUMPs-Up promotes and supports a broad take-up of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) especially in regions and cities where the take up is so far low. A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan has an integrated approach and fosters the development of all relevant transport modes while encouraging a shift toward more sustainable modes. As a result, by the end of the project 30 cities are expected to prepare SUMP ready for adoption.

More information: [www.sumps-up.eu](http://www.sumps-up.eu)

3. **Cities.multimodal** – October 2017-2020

Financing: Baltic Sea Region Interreg Programme 2014-2020; budget: 3 796 750€

Project partners: Lead partner – Hanseatic City of Rostock (DE) + 16 project partners from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Russia

Short description: Many cities throughout the BSR struggle with high inner-city traffic volumes causing severe congestion, poor air quality, noise and high CO2 emissions. Moreover, this reduces the accessibility, puts road safety at risk, increases health problems and reduces quality of life. Multimodal transport and travel – the choice and combination of sustainable transport modes like walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing - as alternative to individual car use are main solutions to tackle these problems. Multimodal transport and travel are still underdeveloped in most cities and are neither on the agenda of politicians nor being implemented by urban and transport planners. The project focuses on dense inner-city areas with growing population and mixed use, offering good opportunities for sustainable mobility. The cities are implementing multimodal mobility points, mobility management concepts and work closely with their citizens in all activities. More information: [www.cities-multimodal.eu](http://www.cities-multimodal.eu)

4. **CASCADE** 2019-2020 (A Flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region)  
Financing: DG ECHO Civil Protection. Budget: 850,871.49  
Project partners: Southwest Finland Emergency Services; UBC Sustainable Cities Commission; Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat CBSS; MSB Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency; Main School of Fire Services (SGSP) in Poland; Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service (LFS); UBC Safe Cities Commission/ Liepaja Municipal police; Frederiksborg Fire & Rescue Services; Stockholm Environment Institute in Tallinn (SEI Tallinn); Åbo Akademi University/CLL in Finland.  
Short description: CASCADE – Community Safety Action for Supporting Climate Adaptation and Development. New innovative project brings together civil protection specialists and climate change adaptation experts to fight the impacts of climate change. CASCADE targets the need to develop risk assessment methodologies tailor-made for the local level and putting them into practice for more resilient societies.  
More information: <http://www.cascade-bsr.eu/>
  
5. **BSR WATER** 2018 - 2021 (A Flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region)  
Financing: BSR INTERREG Programme 2014-2020 with financial support from the Russian Federation; budget: 1 133 440€  
Project partners: UBC Sustainable Cities Commission; HELCOM; Technical University Berlin, University of Tartu and Gdansk University of Technology; Environmental School of Finland; Cities of Helsinki and Riga; SC Mineral and ECAT-Kaliningrad.  
Short description: The project aims to enhance continuous cross-sectoral cooperation in smart water management providing a possibility for transnational experience exchange, sharing of good practices and solutions, as well as delivering comprehensive overview of the current and future policy contexts and their impacts in the BSR countries.  
BSR WATER develops an interactive online water management portal called [Baltic Smart Water Hub](#) to enable international knowledge and expertise exchange.  
More information: <http://www.bsrwater.eu/>
  
6. **HUPMOBILE** 2019 - 2021  
Financing: BSR INTERREG Programme 2014-2020  
Project partners: UBC Sustainable Cities Commission; City of Tallinn; City of Turku; Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (District of Altona); City of Riga; ITL Digital Lab Royal Institute of Technology.  
Short description: The HUPMOBILE - Holistic urban and peri-urban mobility project is aiming to provide a holistic approach to sustainable mobility solutions in cities and their perimeters in Baltic Sea port cities. City authorities, infrastructure operators and transport providers are enabled to assess and integrate innovative mobility options into their mobility management plans and policies
  
7. **The European City Facility (EUCF)** August 2019 – July 2023  
Financing: The EUCF is funded by Horizon 2020  
Project partners: The EUCF is coordinated by consortium consisting of Energy Cities, Climate Alliance, FEDARENDE, Adelphi and ENVIROS.  
Short description: In line with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 goals for climate and energy set by the European Commission, there is a great need for cities, municipalities, and local authorities to invest in sustainable energy and climate solutions. However, many public

stakeholders struggle with limited human resources and capacity and overcoming financial barriers. Also, a lack of experience in developing sound investment packages can be a significant barrier especially for smaller and medium sized municipalities. Nevertheless, public stakeholders have huge potential for uniting synergies and working towards a more energy and climate friendly future in Europe. The European City Facility (EUCF) is an initiative to support local investments in sustainable energy. The objective of the EUCF is to facilitate access to private and EU financing along with access to technical, legal, and financial expertise. In the long run the aim is to deliver at least 200 investment concepts in cities and municipalities all over Europe.

Project partners: 5 project partners from France, Germany, Belgium and Czech Republic.

8. **SEED PROJECTS funded by Interreg BSR Programme** - to support the preparation of projects for new funding period 2021 -2027

**SUMPs for BSR** - Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning for climate resilient BSR cities

October 2020 – December 2021

Financing: BSR INTERREG Programme 2014-2020

Project partners: UBC Sustainable Cities Commission; Technical University Berlin; Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology (ECAT-Lithuania); Cesis Municipality; Municipality of Söderhamn.

Short description: The overall main project goal is to increase the use of sustainable urban mobility planning practices as a strategic tool in the BSR, and support cities in becoming climate resilient and carbon neutral. The project will target especially small and medium sized cities with limited resources and access to support. A SUMP will help municipalities to focus their activities and measures towards their city vision and goals for sustainable development and create the strategic framework for decision-makers and civil servants.

#### **BSR CLIMATE BUDGET**

October 2020 – December 2021

Financing: BSR INTERREG Programme 2014-2020

Project partners: UBC Sustainable Cities Commission; HafenCity University Hamburg; City of Tampere; County Administrative Board of Dalarna.

Short description: The BSR Climate Budget seeks Seed Money support for the development of a main project to explore the climate budget concept and develop resources and guidelines for its implementation. Activities are focus around further research on topic of climate budgeting, to exchange good practices and knowledge and to develop a project which could support cities and regions from the Baltic Sea are to introduce a climate budget in their planning and decision making practices.

**EMPEREST** - En-masse Mapping Of PFAS In Wastewater Treatment Plant Effluents for REuse Strategies in the Baltic Sea Region

October 2020 – December 2021

Financing: BSR INTERREG Programme 2014-2020

Project partners: UBC Sustainable Cities Commission; University of Tartu; Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission (HELCOM); City of Växjö; Berlin University of Technology; Gdańsk Water Utilities.

Short description: The main project aims at giving valuable information to both stakeholders and decisionmakers about the current situation of PFAS and other POPs in the wastewater and

waste activated sludge (WAS). The project also aims to build technological pilots, to showcase the removal of PFAS from the effluent using tertiary/advanced treatment.

The UBC SCC has a reputation for being highly requested to participate in EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region activities and is also enjoying a good reputation as a good project management partner. The success rate of UBC SCC applications has been increasing steadily and is now around 90 %.

#### **4. Cooperation with other organisations**

During 2019-2021, the UBC SCC continued active cooperation with various important stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region.

One of the main guiding strategies for the cooperation is the EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). EUSBSR coordinates the activities to promote a more balanced development of the region.

The strategic cooperation of the UBC – CDP is based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the UBC Executive board in November 2016. The strategic cooperation has been successful and useful for our UBC cities so a new Memorandum of Understanding 2019 – 2021 with CDP was signed in November 2018. During the autumn of 2021, a new Memorandum of Understanding will be signed with CDP to continue upon a well-laid foundation on cooperation in environmental data reporting. Currently more than 170 cities, 50 states and regions, and 2100 companies in Europe use the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System to report, share and act on climate change every year. Globally, more than 800 cities disclose via the CDP, thus, providing an overview of the global situation on climate adaptation, mitigation, and emissions reduction among others. UBC and CDP aim to collectively increase the number of reporting cities in the Baltic Sea Region. In 2016, 6 UBC cities reported to CDP. The number increased to 20 UBC member cities in 2017, and to 28 UBC member cities in 2018. In 2019, 26 UBC cities reported to the CDP benchmark. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of the disclosing cities has stabilized to 23 UBC cities reporting in 2020 and 22 UBC cities in 2021.

Furthermore, UBC SCC is in a close cooperation (as observer) with Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission known as HELCOM. UBC SCC has an observatory status with the body and contributes to the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan as well as other HELCOM thematic policy areas.

UBC SCC has also a well-established cooperation with VASAB – inter-governmental multilateral cooperation of 11 Baltic Sea Region states. Together we are working on sustainability matters on both local (UBC) and transnational level (VASAB) across wide array of activities, such as environment, transport, education, culture, tourism, business development, youth issues, gender equality as well as urban planning.

In the framework of the CBSS – Baltic2030 Action Plan UBC SCC is a member of the Expert Group on Sustainable Development. Organisations lead close cooperation related to management of projects, event planning and mutual support.

Last, but not least, UBC SCC constantly cooperates with multiple public organisations and other relevant stakeholders in the region while implementing various projects.

#### **6. Communications**

During 2019-2021 the UBC SCC has concentrated primarily in raising awareness of the Commission and UBC in general to interest groups and secondly in informing and promoting

co-operation to its member cities. Thirdly the communication efforts have consisted of disseminating information and educating about the various sustainability themed projects the UBC SCC is involved with. The communication strategy for the UBC SCC has been to use more online tools and channels of communication in its activities and to have a more targeted presence in social media. These tools have among other things helped to facilitate the participation especially to the online events more efficiently. Below is listed the description of the most important channels used in the Commission's day-to-day communication activities

**Online meetings.** The UBC SCC continued using the online meeting tools over the years 2020 – 2021 and all UBC SCC's Advisory Board meetings were held as online meetings. A new online meeting software has helped to facilitate also most internal project meetings online.

**UBC Sustainable Cities Commission website** showcases sustainable solutions developed by the UBC member cities, shares own and cities' news and events as well as news and events from sustainability related projects either the UBC SCC or its member cities are involved with. The website has around 1000 visits per month. Apart from managing UBC SCC Commission's main web page, communication team of the UBC SCC also develops and maintains web pages of the ongoing projects coordinated by the UBC SCC.

**The Sustainable Cities Bulletin** continues to be published online 3-4 times per year. The SC 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.

**Newsletters and Invitations** are also being sent out electronically several times a year, at least once a month. These newsletters, invitations and reminders have the purpose of promoting, disseminating and educating the UBC SCC contacts on upcoming events and/or ongoing projects. The UBC Sustainable Cities Bulletin and electronic newsletters have 293 subscribers. The recipient list is updated according to the GDPR regulations.

**Webinars** in UBC SCC have been one of the main instruments for capacity development, showcasing and promoting sustainability themed activities. The regular webinars launched in 2020 under the brand UBC TALKS (monthly 2020 and quarterly in 2021) have attracted over 1200 active participants and viewers in the period from January 2020 to September 2021. The webinars have been promoted via UBC SCC's online channels and raised interest among followers and UBC member cities. The webinar recordings are available on **UBC SCC website and YouTube channel** for further use and dissemination. Altogether 13 UBC TALKS webinars under different sustainable themes have been arranged during the period of November 2019 to October 2021. The UBC SCC is encouraged to continue organizing the UBC TALKS webinars as an important tool for the knowledge sharing and exchange among the network.

**UBC-CDP cooperation** - UBC SCC also played a big role in the co-operation between UBC and CDP 2019 – 2021. The Commission coordinated the communication and marketing activities of the annual CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System to the UBC member cities. A joint webinar offering best practices and good tips in March 2020 and a Q&A Live event in June 2021 have



been organised in cooperation with CDP to engage UBC cities to continue their disclosure processes in global benchmarking. UBC SCC is also responsible for the content producing and visual layout of the annually published joint report showcasing the co-operation results with the newest report aiming to be released later in the autumn of 2021. The previous reports are available on the website.

**Online platform for the water expertise exchange** is one of the UBC SCC tools for a more active involvement of member cities into the cooperation on the water management aspect of sustainability. The portal Baltic Smart Water Hub, launched by UBC SCC in 2017 at the XIV UBC General Conference has been developed further, now hosting ca. 50 examples of local excellence in water operation and management from the UBC members.

### Statistics on social media coverage

UBC SCC is active in various communication channels on a day-to-day basis, providing coverage of the events, spreading awareness, promoting the UBC SCC and UBC in general.

As of 2021, the UBC SCC is present on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube as well as LinkedIn (back-to-back with the main Secretariat of UBC). All these social media channels have slightly different target groups:

**UBC SCC Facebook** account is mainly targeted to the general public. In September of 2021 it had a total of 866 compared to the 683 followers from July 2019. The account has seen 21,1% organic growth between 2019 and 2021.

**UBC SCC Twitter account** has as its target audience mainly UBC member cities, sustainability experts, authorities, influencers, organizations and policy advocates among others. The Twitter account had 1286 followers in September 2021 compared to the 1191 followers from July 2019. The account has seen 7,4% organic growth between 2019 and 2021.

**UBC SCC Instagram** account is used to disseminate information on events and projects and has as its targeted to UBC member cities, project partners, organizations and the general public. The Instagram account had 274 followers in September 2021 compared to the 117 from July 2019. The account has seen 57,3% organic growth between 2019 and 2021.

**UBC SCC YouTube** account is used mainly for disseminating videos from various project events where UBC SCC has been involved and videos of the sustainability themed webinars it as organized, the account has 56 subscribers.

**UBC SCC LinkedIn** account (used back-to-back with the main Secretariat of UBC) has 450 followers compared to 269 followers in July 2021. For the posts done by SCC staff, the target audience includes international experts in the sustainability field. SCC shares approximately 2-4 posts per month on the LinkedIn account, e.g. the articles and news from member cities that are published in the Sustainable Cities Bulletin.