



Reviewing five years of regional progress towards sustainable development and proposing future action

Baltic 21 contributes to the 5th Baltic Sea States Summit of the Heads of Government in Laulasmaa, Estonia, 21 June 2004

Having reviewed progress towards sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region, in its [report to Prime Ministers](#) Baltic 21 stresses that further efforts are warranted. Baltic 21 proposes that the Baltic Sea Region would become an "Eco-Region" – where "Eco" stands for both "Economy" and "Ecology" and where the Social dimension is strongly integrated. Baltic 21 is prepared and committed to contribute to achieving this through its new line of action.

Five years of regional progress towards sustainable development

To date, Baltic 21 has made three assessments of sustainable development trends in the Baltic Sea Region (available on the Baltic 21 website). Two of them, based on over 100 indicators, deliver comprehensive information. The third one, submitted today to Prime Ministers, aims to deliver an essential message:

The Baltic Sea Region has made significant progress towards sustainable development in recent years, but there remain important warning signals and critical trends still to be addressed.

The strategic analysis made by Baltic 21 reveals that the most critical points of challenge for sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region are:

- Safeguarding the Baltic marine ecosystem;
- Technology change and demand management in energy use, particularly in the fossil fuel-driven transport sector; controlling greenhouse gas emissions;
- Continued and accelerated improvements in agricultural practice and policy; and
- Continued attention to reducing the gaps in economic and social conditions between older and newer market economies.

A new mandate to address existing and emerging challenges

Baltic 21 has developed a new line of action to address regional challenges to sustainable development. Taking the advantage of its multistakeholder character, Baltic 21 plans to promote **integration of sustainable development into regional policy making** through supporting the Council of the Baltic Sea States and its processes. Regional trends and policies impacting the sustainability of the region will be reviewed and recommendations be made for regional discussion and joint action. Finally, Baltic 21 will strive to **strengthen involvement in cross-sectoral work** to bring added value to regional efforts for sustainable development.

The identified challenges and the lessons learned during the first five years of Baltic 21 suggest a need to focus future efforts on fewer initiatives that are larger, bolder, and likely to produce tangible results that are visible in the region. Therefore, one of the proposed four action areas for Baltic 21 is to **act as an umbrella for a focused set of so-called "Lighthouse Projects"** designed to demonstrate sustainable development in action (further information about the three initial projects is provided in the linked **Information sheets: [BaltCoast](#), [Baltic SeaBreeze](#), [New Hansa](#)**). Efforts will be taken to identify funding sources to support them and other region-level sustainable development initiatives.

Baltic 21 is...

... a regional response to the global Agenda 21 adopted in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It is a multi-stakeholder forum for co-operation for sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region initiated by the Heads of Government in the region. Its members include Governments of all the 11 countries from this region, the European Commission, Intergovernmental Organisations, International Financial Institutions as well as Non-governmental Organisations.

Further information

For further information please visit our website at www.baltic21.org or contact:

Mr. Valdis Bisters, Baltic 21 SOG Chairman
Phone: +371 7026 417
E-mail: chair@baltic21.org

Baltic 21 Secretariat
Phones: +46 8 440 19 38/41
E-mail: secretariat@baltic21.org