

# Development of holistic and strategic concepts for innovative and energy efficient construction of new buildings in the Baltic States

## Vision for a better living

During the last years it has become more and more apparent that energy is an increasingly scarce resource which should be used economically. This implies that we should consume as little energy as possible in our everyday lives. Our vision is an energy efficient living in an energy-lean city, where energy consumption is an important yardstick by which the decisions are measured.

This vision is based on an understanding of how energy efficiency should be included into various spheres of decisions, starting from the holistic policy level down to the individual one. These spheres should be equally addressed by approaches that target on increasing energy efficiency.

However, addressing these spheres or levels is not enough. It is also important that the three pillars of sustainability are taken into consideration, this means social, ecological and economic sustainability.

The combination of spheres and pillars of sustainability creates a matrix which can be found below. The elements of the matrix present recommendation which we consider as helpful in order to achieve an energy-efficient living while ensuring a sustainable development.

It becomes visible that energy issues are cross-sectoral issues, that play a role in virtually every part of our everyday lives, starting with the ride to the workplace, modern communication, heating our flats and houses, building kindergartens with sufficiently insulated walls up to the long-term energy supply for the whole country.

This vision for a better living, energy-lean and energy-efficient describes the frame which the members of the Baltic Environmental Forum Group have adopted as a guidance for their future activities in this field.

Baltic Environmental Forum Group, 2008

		Pillars of sustainability		
		social sustainability	ecologic sustainability	economic sustainability
Modules	<b>1. Holistic approach in policy and planning</b>	Ensure energy supply for all inhabitants, include inhabitants in planning decisions. Support non-governmental groups, citizens' associations and community work.	Ensure long-term ecologically sound policy decisions and prevent energy-related problems: congestion, land use, noise, air quality.	Make the city competitive and innovative by fostering an energy efficient economy, money saving through energy-lean cities. Include all policy sectors into an energy efficiency programme.
	<b>2. Energy sources and energy supply</b>	Ensure socially fair energy prices. Take social implication of certain energy sources into consideration.	Use renewable, sustainable, at least climate-neutral sources of energy.	Ensure safe supply and switch to an energy-mix to prevent supply shortages. Create safe and reliable energy networks. Strengthen the local energy economy, reduce dependencies.
	<b>3. Urban planning and mobility</b>	Ensure affordable mobility patterns and a network that is accessible to everyone. Find mobility solutions that allow access the whole city with special regard also the elderly and children.	Reduce dependency on fossil fuels, promote renewable energies; reduce carbon dioxide emissions by shifting modal split towards PT and avoiding trips.	Save energy and money through shifting the modal split towards PT, save money through green procurement. Adopt innovative and smart mobility solutions to avoid unnecessary trips and become more competitive.
	<b>4. Housing, heating and electricity consumption</b>	Promote energy efficient construction of houses to owners, but also in the rental sector; foster energy efficient behaviour at home. Reduce impacts of global energy markets to local inhabitants by strengthening local resources.	Reduce the dependency on fossil fuels; promote renewable energies and local construction materials. Change to green electricity. Strengthen local energy supply and prevent environmental effects of energy production elsewhere.	Create markets for energy efficient housing construction materials and specialized architects. Save money through reduced energy and heat consumption. Reduce the impacts from price increases by substituting oil and gas.
	<b>5. Tackling low awareness</b>	Include also underprivileged citizens to awareness raising. Pay attention to the needs of various target groups. Train multipliers and decision-makers.	Prevent ecologically bad behaviour. Reduce negatives side-effects from energy wasting living.	Adopt to new developments and regulations. Be better than the required standard and ensure your competitive-ness. Convince energy intensive economies to upgrade their technique to stay competitive and in accordance with more strict legislation to come. Prevent ecological malinvestments.
	<b>6. Improvement through capacity transfer</b>	Create a knowledge-intensive society, foster life-long learning. Keep track with a fast changing world. Ensure access to information to everyone. Include various stakeholders to reach your goal. Form networks and support advocacy coalitions.	Foster more environmentally friendly and energy efficient behaviour. Promote decisions for environmentally friendly solutions. Prevent unnecessary interferences with the environment.	Increase the capacity potential, be up-to-date with the newest green economic developments and become more competitive on global markets, become a city of energy smart ideas and solutions. Adopt best available technique and become a frontrunner.

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## About the project

The project is intended to mark the initial point of a larger programme of measures of the Baltic Environmental Forum Group for fostering the development of energy saving construction of new buildings and promoting energy saving behaviour in the Baltic States. The overall objective of this project is to lay the basis for integrated planning in the region.

The project aims at fostering successful best-practice adaptation concepts and at fostering a successful adaptation concept for best-practice of energy efficient buildings/houses in the Baltic States from Germany and Western Europe. Therefore it is important to understand the knowledge gaps of construction-related stakeholders, such as architects, engineers, craftsmen, and other related stakeholders. It is foreseen to develop an appropriate training concept to fill these gaps. But the project focusses not only the supply side but also on the demand side: The development of a strategy to guide consumer patterns is planned to be developed during the project. It shall tap into the slowly changing consumer behaviour, raising their awareness and understanding for saving energy.

Last but not least the project is intended to strengthen local capacities: The capacities of local experts among the BEF network with regard to the previously mentioned topics shall be raised to broaden and deepen the foundation for sustainable knowledge sources in the region.

An international seminar on best practices regarding energy efficiency issues in the Baltic States will be organised during the project run in summer 2008 in Latvia. A brochure on best practice will be elaborated and will be available on the BEF Germany homepage for download.

Funded by the German Federal Foundation for the Environment



Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt