

Systematization and Needs Assessment



BALTIC SEA REGION NETWORK ON EDUCATION
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



PROJECT
SUPPORT
FACILITY

Acknowledgement

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”If you think education is expensive – try ignorance” -

Derek Bob, Harvard President 1971-1990.

The Baltic Sea Region Network on Education for Sustainable Development, BSRESND, is an initiative that evolved in connection with the Visby conference, The Power of ESD, in November 2012. The network has focused to grow from a bottom-up approach, where the educational and skills development needs in the Baltic Sea region has been extracted over time to meet challenges in how to achieve a more sustainable society and empower both individuals as well as institutions and NGOs through the lens of Education for Sustainable Development, ESD.

Since the global community through UN in 2015 have defined new SDGs where all stakeholders at all levels, in all countries, are drivers for achieving the goals, this report argues ideas for defining ways on how to collaborate at a local/regional level within a country and establish local research and education hubs as keys for sustainable education done within the format of UNESCOs framework Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, GAP on ESD, as a driver to achieve the SDGs.

The SDGs could be achieved if working together, at all levels, from all sectors through good educational methods but with the necessity of being adapted out of its own context. In this case tools, methods and frames to work together at a local level within each country to meet the sustainable challenges from an own context. To be able to define best methods and tools as well as gain information about the way implementation is done, it needs a component of research, both for best theoretical framing as well as action or integrated research while implementing.

ABBREVIATIONS

BSR	Baltic Sea region
BSRES DN	Baltic Sea Region Network on Education for Sustainable Development
BUP	Baltic University Programme
CE	Citizenship Education
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CEMUS	Centre for Environment and Development Studies at Uppsala University
COP21	Conference of Parties ²¹ (The Paris conference)
CSD	Center for Sustainable Development at Uppsala University
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEAR	Development Education and Awareness Rising
EC	European Commission
EFA	Education for All
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESDN	European Sustainable Development Network
EU	European Union
EUSBSR	European Union Strategy for Baltic Sea Region
EUSDS	European Sustainable Development Strategy
GAP	Global Action Programme
GE	Global Education
GEM	Global Education for All Meeting
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission
IAC	Latvian Education Development Centre
IBA	Inquiry Based Approach

LAPAS	The Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NDP	National Development Plan
NEF	National Education Forum
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OWG	Open Working Group (of the UN General Assembly)
PSF	Project Support Facility
RCE	Regional Center of Expertise
REALS	Resilient and Ecological Approaches for Living Sustainable
SAEIMA	The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SD	Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SWEDESD	Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development
TDP	Teachers for Democracy and Partnership
10YFP	Ten Years Framework of Programmes on SCP Patterns
UBC	Union of the Baltic Cities
UNDESD	United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNU	United Nations University
UNU-IAS	United Nations University – Institute of Advanced Studies
VASAB	Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea

1. BACKGROUND

Towards the end of 2012, an idea was born to establish a cross-border, cross-sectoral network on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within the Baltic Sea region (BSR) which is now referred to as BSRESND. The aim of this idea was to encourage interaction, joint learning and joint actions among ESD practitioners in educational systems both within the formal and informal settings beyond the country borders. It is a very broad target area, but, ESD is complex and needs to be addressed collaboratively and cross-boundary. The now established Baltic Sea Region Network on Education for Sustainable Development (BSRESND) has in its first two phases, organized for conferences, capacity building trainings and workshops. This brought together different stakeholders from different sectors and 12 different countries to discuss issues of sustainability through ESD. The ongoing phase 3 of the network is aimed at scaling up horizontally, while focusing on capacity building at a regional level. This regional scale up is to address the new Sustainable Development

Goals (SDG) by use of new global development frameworks that are adapted to the local contexts of the member countries and that will be applicable to all countries in the world. To be able to address the SDGs through the GAP on ESD in an appropriate and sustainable way within the BSR, this systematization and needs assessment document is conducted to stand base for implementation of activities within the BSRESND addressing the international framework of SDGs at a regional and local level.

1.1 Disposition, delimitations and methods

This report is divided in four sections; section A which gives an introductory background of the BSRESNDs development, followed by (B) a sequence of chapters describing the Interna-

tional, European Union and Baltic Sea Region integration of the SDGs, ESD and Sustainable Development (SD) into policies or not. Section (C) gives insights from a country level regarding the same issues. Section (D), which is composed of the last two chapters of the report, reflect, discuss and give suggestions for implementations for the BSRESN's one year project, *Local Research and Education Hubs – key for sustainable education*, funded by the Council of the Baltic Sea States – Project Support Facility (CBSS PSF). The last section of the report includes references as well as three Annexes including the questionnaire sent out to strategic persons within the different countries.

The author is aware there are many educational concepts developed both internationally, regionally as well as per country. Probably not all of them have been mentioned in this report, but those mentioned might be the most significant with regards to the SDGs and GAP on ESD as well as “just” ESD.

The insights gained from the national and country level is based on information received from key-persons and survey respondents working within each country in connection with various national policy documents. The report also includes information from various policy documents that all together form the basis for the reflections and suggestions in chapter 5 and 6. It has to be taken into consideration that the findings and proposals are not carved in stone. As is said all throughout this report, the world is rapidly changing and the most important issues of today may have changed tomorrow. But it could serve as a basis for implementation for the BSRESN's activities.

1.2 BSRESN Phase 1 and 2

Already at the first meeting to explore the need of developing a new ESD network within the BSR the questions to answer were: Is there a need for a new network? What will the network focus on? What will be the contribution of this network to the already existing interventions within the region? The 23 participants from 8 countries within the Baltic Sea Region (Latvia, Belarus, Estonia, Sweden, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania) who met in Visby in October 2012 all agreed that there was a need to support capacity development among ESD-related practitioners, policy makers and researchers in different sectors of society at large. That emphasis should be placed on the professional development of practitioners, whether in formal educational settings or in informal and non-formal learning situations.

The network also agreed on a bottom-up approach to fill gaps of different kinds: between the theory and rhetoric of SD and ESD and actual SD and ESD practice; between the three SD dimensions (economic, social and environmental); between levels (local, regional, national and international) and types of organizations (governmental, non-governmental, public and private) as well as within the groups of practitioners, such as teachers and teacher educators within the formal education or educators within the non-formal and informal sector, researchers and policy makers.

In consultation with the Baltic University Program (BUP) and other initial partners for developing the network it was decided that a first

task was to thoroughly examine the grounds, needs and conditions for establishing a cross-boundary network. In 2013, SWEDESSED recruited two master students at CEMUS (Uppsala University) as interns to conduct a survey among respondents from Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia and Latvia. They represented various types of organisations, such as universities, schools, NGOs, government and research institutions. Many of the respondents considered that the most crucial aim of the network was to bring people together from different sectors at different levels and from different countries and to allow them to collaborate. Therefore they applauded the idea of establishing the BSRESN. As several respondents noted, it is always useful to share knowledge, understanding and experiences of developing ESD. It gives opportunities to unite efforts to promote the latest insights on SD – not only in the Baltic region – and to work on joint practical projects that can affect real lifestyle changes.

Most respondents did not expect any competition between the BSRESN Network and other already existing networks. As the respondents said, the new network would certainly overlap with other networks, but rather than causing frictions it would reinforce and stimulate activities and initiatives.

When it came to the question of strengthening the ESD situation in the Baltic Sea region, most respondents agreed that it was important to change the way of thinking and doing in society and teach people to think more sustainably. As for the impact of the network within the BSR most respondents saw the opportunity to find soul mates with whom to share information and experience as well as to explore

possibilities of working together and to help each other.

According to the above findings, the 2 first phases of the BSRESN focused on following activities; Baltic conferences to address SD/ESD issues, workshops to enhance capacity building of professionals within the SD/ESD field such as facilitating multi-stakeholder groups to address a common SD challenge at a regional level. One workshop focused on identifying and sharing good SD/ESD training materials for the BSR. In the material workshop it was concluded that instead of “just” identify and translate material it was more important to first structure and identify what good ESD/SD material should emphasize. It was done through a matrix asking following questions: What context/ dimension do the material support/emphasize?; developing SELF “inner layers”?; developing COMMUNITY “outerlayers”? or developing the WORLD “universal layers”?

At the material workshop, the importance of developing competences for emphasizing a more sustainable society within the Baltic Sea Region was discussed and 5 main competences were defined: system thinking, and anticipatory, normative, strategic and interpersonal competences.

Throughout all activities, evaluations have been made both among partners as well as participants in the various BSRESN activities, with the aim of to make sure to identify, focus and address the right issues. Emphasis has been on interaction, working and learning together, finding synergies on how to collaborate. The feedback from the different activities have been very positive as many participants found

it good to interact, meet like-minded people, to get new ESD/SD insights, found new partners for projects etc. some challenges were also discussed, such as; the need to talk more about values, see connections of own consumption and global issues; we need to focus more on the educational tools for SD; we have national differences that vary and influence the ESD/SD process at a national/regional/local level; we need sessions in how to facilitate multi-stakeholder groups to address local ESD/SD issues; we need to get a common understanding of SD/ESD; we need to bring in other actors into the work such as media, politicians, business sector etc..

Based on the previous phases of the BSRESND, the focus for the third phase is building capacities at a local, regional level. In this phase, different individuals are key drivers to influence and address SDGs challenges emanating from own context and make attitude change for a more sustainable society. The aim is to find tools to work together in a collaborative way to be able to address complex societal issues in locally adapted ways and create individual responsibility to make that happen.

Ever since the start of the initiative in Visby 2012, possibilities have been explored to formalize the network. Over time, through interviews and insights from partners and participants in BSRESNDs activities it was agreed to keep the network more fluid and vibrant rather than formalizing it. The networks is expected to allow people to get together and take responsibility to solve common SD issues while being able to join other constellation/ network at different levels simultaneously. It is equally important to note that, to create an ownership

of such broad and vibrant network it needs to have a leading driver. So far the network has been driven by a partnership of organisations such as Baltic University Programme – Åbo Akademi University, Finland; STATERA – Tallinn University, Estonia; Green Dossier, Ukraine; Daugavpils University, Latvia; Youth International Education Club NEWLINE, Belarus; Development Bulb, Latvia; Braslav Gymnasium, Belarus and SWEDESD, Sweden. During current project period, Aug 2015 – June 2016 it is the Latvian organization LAPAS, which has taken the lead for the network in collaboration with 6 partners. This informal way of structuring the network has made it possible over time to build a sense of trust and respect in the core partnership of the network, and this has been crucial for its achievements. The activities made in the BSRESND has included participation from other networks and other key ESD-actors in the area, and over time more than 400 people have been included in the network's activities. Upscaling of the network is foreseen, and for which EU funds will be sought.

2.

THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SDGS AND ESD

To be able to understand, reflect and see what steps need to be taken to define educational tools for a more sustainable society within the BSR, we need to first define the different international frameworks for sustainable development that we have to act within. At this moment, we work within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that has superseded the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The SDGs are the most appropriate foundation to address global and local sustainable development issues. But how should the SDGs be addressed and localised to see a clear connection of SDGs with everyday life at the local community level? What appropriate educational framework should be used within this project to make contributions and reach the new SDGs at a local/regional level?

2.1 Sustainable Development Goals

In the preamble of the new global Sustainable Development Goals, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives, stated at the meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 25-27 September 2015 that:

This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global chal-

lenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want [and] to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.

The aim of the 17 SDGs including 169 specific targets is to make the goals more universal and seek to build on the MDGs to complete what was not achieved within the MDG's framework. It could be seen as a scaling-up as well as more specific and more focused. Emphasis is placed on addressing human rights issues and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The SDGs also take into consideration the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Therefore, it is appropriate to use them as an overall framework for what the BSRESN Network wants to achieve for the BSR.

When adopting the SDGs the UN General Assembly recognised that it envisages a world in which every country enjoys sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all. A world in which consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources – from air to land, from rivers, lakes and aquifers to oceans and seas – are sustainable. One in which democracy, good governance and the rule of law, as well as an enabling environment at national and international levels, are essential for sustain-

able development, including sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger. One in which development and the application of technology are climate-sensitive, respect biodiversity and are resilient. One in which humanity lives in harmony with nature, and in which wildlife and other living species are protected.

Within the 17 SDGs goal number 4 is dedicated to education “Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. There are 7 sub-goals and goal 4.7 is specifically acknowledging ESD “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.” But goal number 4 has to be seen as one means to achieve the other 16 goals.

All stakeholders need to be engaged at all levels to be able to achieve all 17 Goals including the 169 targets and connect them to everyday life at local and regional communities. This also embraces the fundamental idea of the BSRESN Network to work and learn together at multi-stakeholder level in a collaborative way. The 3rd phase of this project strives to use the skills, knowledge and strength of stakeholders at a regional/ local level, recognising CSOs (including NGOs) in society in order to collaboratively address the SDGs at a local/ regional level through learning and education.

2.2 Education

It could be seen that there are two parallel international frameworks initiated by UNESCO; one is Education for All (EFA), launched in 1990, that aims at providing qualitatively basic education for all children, youths and adults. The other framework, launched by UNESCO as a continuation of the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014 (UNDESD), is the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (GAP/ESD). It seeks to generate and scale-up concrete actions within ESD. GAP/ESD is seen as an international framework to address the global challenges with relevant educational tools to include all stakeholders in society to be able to reach the SDGs.

There are several different educational initiatives such as Environment Education, Education for Peace & Justice, Global Education, Development Education, Citizenship Education, Multi-cultural Education etc. with the aim to address different sectors of a more sustainable society, whether within the social, environmental or economic sector. However, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims at allowing every human being to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a more sustainable future. ESD has been integrated into many global frameworks related to key areas for SD, for example within climate change, biodiversity, disaster and risk reduction and sustainable consumption and production. In the new SDGs, ESD has a special recognition within Goal 4.7. The

educational dimensions of ESD including learning content; pedagogy and the learning environment; and learning outcomes are based on a holistic and transformative approach needed to empower learners to take informed decisions and responsible action. Therefore, the concept of ESD could be seen as a good framing of the educational part of achieving the new SDGs within the BSR.

In this report it is argued that the GAP/ESD is an overall umbrella for all different educational initiatives (Global Education, Citizenship Education, etc.). This does not exclude other initiatives as useful educational tools to address the SDGs. On the contrary, they could be useful educational entry points depending on the contexts of where learning and education are taking place, and on the kind of issues within the SDGs to address. For this report, the framing will be on education and learning within the GAP/ESD framework.

Within this report, one also has to mention the 10-year framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) developed by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2012. It is a global framework of action to enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in both developed and developing countries. Within the 10YFP there is a special sub-programme on Sustainable Lifestyles and Education.

Sustainable consumption and production has now been recognised as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has been identified as a stand-alone

SDG (SDG 12) and as a central component of many of the 17 goals and 169 targets agreed in the agenda. Indicators need to be developed to monitor the impact of policies and initiatives promoting this shift in consumption and production patterns as well as the institutional capacity to implement the necessary measures and actions. In March 2015 a discussion paper was developed by UNEP to give suggestions for SCP indicators for the SDGs.

2.3 The GAP on ESD

In 2005, the United Nations Decade of ESD was launched to enhance the role of education in promoting sustainable development. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20), the international community agreed to “promote education for sustainable development, and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the UNDESD.”

There is now a growing international recognition of ESD as an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development. Both the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education For All Meeting (GEM) in 2014 and the proposal for Sustainable Development Goals developed by the Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly on SDGs (OWG) include ESD in the proposed targets for the post-2015 agenda.

In 2013, the 37th session of the General Conference of UNESCO endorsed the GAP/ESD as the follow-up to the Decade and was launched at the Nagoya Conference in November 2015 at the end of UNDESD. Build-

ing on the achievements of the Decade the overall goal for the GAP/ESD is “to generate and scale-up action in all levels and areas of education and learning in order to accelerate progress towards sustainable development” with two main objectives:

- a) to reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development; and
- b) to strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development.

To enable a strategic focus and foster stakeholder commitment, the GAP/ESD is divided into five priority action areas to advance the ESD agenda:

→ PRIORITY ACTION AREA 1

Advancing policy: Mainstream ESD into both education and sustainable development policies, to create an enabling environment for ESD and to bring about systemic change Priority Action area 2.

→ PRIORITY ACTION AREA 2

Transforming learning and training environments: Integrate sustainability principles into education and training settings.

→ PRIORITY ACTION AREA 3

Building capacities of educators and trainers: Increase the capacities of educators and trainers to more effectively deliver ESD.

→ PRIORITY ACTION AREA 4

Empowering and mobilising youth:

Multiply ESD actions among youth.

→ PRIORITY ACTION AREA 5

Accelerating sustainable solutions at a local level: At a community level, scale up ESD programmes and multi-stakeholder ESD networks.

2.4 How could the GAP on ESD accelerate the solutions of the SDGs?

On 6 November 2015 United Nations University (UNU) held a special symposium on the topic of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and how ESD could emphasise the implementation and addressing of the SDGs. The symposium explored how the many and varied stakeholders in the global effort could effectively collaborate, with a particular emphasis on the role of scientific knowledge and education, as well as new partnerships between the public and private sectors.

Within the new SDGs, goal number 4 aims to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all” with 7 specific targets. However, to be able to achieve all of the other 16 SDGs, it requires qualitative and relevant life-long learning and education at all levels in society as well.

In the report *Learning – The Treasure Within* from the United Nations Educational, Scien-

tific and Cultural Organization, 1996 following is said:

Education has a fundamental role to play in personal and social development. It is not a miracle cure or a magic formula opening the door to a world in which all ideals will be attained. It is one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war. The coming century, dominated by globalisation, will bring with it enduring tensions to overcome, tensions between the global and the local, the universal and the individual, tradition and modernity, long-term and short-term considerations, competitions and equality of opportunities, the unlimited expansion of knowledge and the limited capacity of human beings to assimilate it, and the spiritual and the material. Whatever the diversity of cultures, and systems of social organisation, there is a universal challenge of reinventing the democratic ideal to create, or maintain, social cohesion.

Therefore, life-long learning tools need to be defined. As Jacques Delors, who chaired the UNESCO Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century between 1993 and 1996, says, that life-long learning rests on four pillars: Learning to be; learning to know; learning to do and learning to live together.

It may sound simple in its essence, but to implement and structure learning and education with a holistic approach and at the same time contextualise it to fit the local situation, will be hard work that needs good governance and structures. The SDGs have to influence the

education and learning and vice versa, education and learning need to influence the SDGs. What is needed to take into consideration is the connections between content (substance, the SD issues) and methods (empowerment, emancipatory, participation etc.) with a holistic approach.

The following template describes one way of structuring the learning and education that needs to be defined at national, regional and local levels. It shows the SDG4 in one column but learning and education needs to also happen in the other 16 SDGs. Learning and education within SDG4, quality education, needs to be used as tools within all the other SDGs as one way of achieving the goals. One way of structure education and learning to take place is through the GAP/ESDs 5 Action Areas as shown in below template.

What learning needs to take place within the various boxes?

2.5 Indications for the European Union take on the SDGs and ESD

There is currently a debate on whether to rewrite the European Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS), for the period ending 2020, to include the new SDGs or to write a new EU 2030 Strategy, based on the SDGs. Amongst stakeholders there generally appears to be a wide measure of consensus that a single Agenda 2030 framework for the EU should be created that would cover both the domestic changes needed within the EU to advance the sustainability transformation and EU's international obligations.

The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN), an informal network of public administrators and other experts dealing with sustainable development strategies and policies while promoting the exchange of good practices and advising policy-makers at the European and national level, held a meeting in Luxembourg in October 2015 to discuss the

GAP on ESD Priority areas	Learning & Education within SDG number 4, Quality Education	Learning & Education in all the other 16 SDGs
1. Advancing Policy		
2. Transforming learning and training environment		
3. Building capacity of educators and trainers		
4. Empowering and mobilising youth		
5. Accelerating sustainable solutions at a local level		

new SDGs and how to implement the 2030 Agenda in Europe as well as at a national level. The meeting recognised the importance of civil society as a driving force to implement the agenda and that the new agenda represents an opportunity to put sustainable development back on the EU agenda. The meeting discussed the challenges the EU is facing in reducing the environmental impacts on the economy and increased social coherence and inclusion, the necessity for Europe to move out of its comfort zone. It also contemplated the idea of creating a European Sustainable Development Forum with the aim to involve and engage Civil Society Organisations (CSO) at an EU level to play an active role for implementing the SDGs. Because stakeholder participation was seen as crucial, the meeting formulated the following recommendations for stakeholder involvement:

“4. Stakeholder participation and partnerships are essential. It is important (i) to encourage and enable grass-root initiatives and experimentation; (ii) to create platforms that not only comprise institutionalised stakeholders, but also other actors for specific issues; and (iii) to use NGOs for raising awareness for the importance of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs and to keep pressuring for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.”

A European Commission (EC) fact sheet regarding the SDGs stressed that *“The 2030 Agenda is a universal agreement; its implementation will require action by all countries, developed and developing. It will be underpinned by a Global Partnership, mobilising governments and stakeholders (citizens, civil society, the private sector, academia, etc.), at all levels.”*

In order to implement the SDGs within the EU, all member states should recognise that advancing sustainable development also depends on their domestic action, Therefore, they should develop their own sets of implementation measures.

Already in 2005, at the High-level meeting of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Vilnius 2005, a Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development was adopted. It foresaw that “education, in addition to being a human right, is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development and an essential tool for good governance, informed decision-making and the promotion of democracy.” Within this aim, member states were encouraged to develop and incorporate ESD within their educational frameworks. Section II SCOPE point 8 of the document says: “The Strategy will be adopted by interested UNECE member States. States outside the region are also encouraged to follow it.”

The UNECE Progress Report of 2010 observed that the countries having endorsed the UNECE strategy on ESD (based on 36 countries reporting) “are progressing in their efforts to implement education for sustainable development in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. The majority of countries has accomplished or are close to finalising and putting into place policy, regulatory and operational frameworks that support ESD. Serious attempts have been made to integrate ESD into formal education, resulting in a considerable coverage of ESD-related key themes, learning outcomes, methods and strategies. Also, the adoption of a whole institution approach had advanced remarkably in the European Union and other countries from

the Western European and Others Group (Canada, Iceland, Israel and Norway). Countries were clearly shifting their attention from the political to the practical: i.e., they are putting the Strategy into action. Over the run of phase II, the visibility of sustainable development issues had also increased considerably in the media and the amount of research done in the sustainable development field had grown. Generally speaking, ESD activities in informal and non-formal learning were expanding successfully” according to the UNECE report.

Among some of the challenges reported in the UNECE report was a) the need for improved communication between relevant Ministries and those designing intersectoral programmes, b) a need for supporting the development of whole institutional approaches c) the necessity for clarity on how ESD could contribute to increased overall educational quality d) awareness raising both among decision makers as well as educators. In the 2015 report challenges were still seen in integrating ESD system-wide across all aspects and levels of education (formal, In-formal, non-formal).

At the Council of the European Union meeting in Brussels, in October 2010 it was stressed that education and learning have a crucial role in facing interlinked challenges, including the economic and social consequences of the global financial crisis, climate change, declining water and energy resources, shrinking biodiversity, threats to food security and health risks. And the Council invited all member states to “take appropriate measures at the relevant level of responsibility - local, regional or national - in order to encourage the further development and implementation of ESD and its integration into the education and training system at

all levels, in non-formal and informal learning just as in formal learning.”

It also stated that all European citizens should be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to understand and deal with the challenges and complexities of modern day life, whilst taking due account of the environmental, social, cultural and economic implications, as well as to assume their global responsibilities.

However as will be seen in the indicators from the various countries below, the implementation or incorporation of ESD into national strategies has been varied.

2.6 Baltic Sea Region policies to address the international framework on SDG and ESD

There are specific strategies for the Baltic Sea Region that are based on global and EU strategies. The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) from 2009 is the first macro-regional strategy of its kind in Europe. The strategy applies to eight countries: Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. But they are also encouraged to work with neighbouring countries such as Russia, Norway and Belarus. (Interestingly, Ukraine is not mentioned in the document). The USBRS Action Plan 2013 foresees a so-called horizontal action to deepen dialogue between actors at all levels of governance in the BSR on how to jointly tackle future problems and challenges. Even though

the strategy and action plan do not per se talk about SD it is sort of implied.

For nearly two decades, the member countries of the Council of the Baltic Sea States have been guided in their collaboration on sustainable development by “Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region - Baltic 21.” Mandated by agreement of the region’s heads of state in 1998, “Baltic 21” has filled an important and unique role that has complemented other collaboration mechanisms in the region such as HELCOM and VASAB. The CBSS Baltic 21 Strategy on Sustainable Development 2010 – 2015 highlighted the importance of deepening dialogue between actors at all levels of governance in the BSR on how to jointly tackle future problems and challenges. The Strategy defined 4 strategic areas:

- 1) Climate Change,
- 2) Sustainable Urban and Rural development,
- 3) Sustainable consumption and production and
- 4) Innovation and Education for Sustainable Development (where BSRESDN’s project is defined under area number 4).

Many initiatives undertaken during these years have led to improvements in the region’s capacity to cooperate on complex challenges that have environmental, economic, and social dimensions. In June 2014, the Council of the Baltic Sea States indicated their intention to develop a new sustainable development agenda for the Baltic Sea Region with specific goals for post 2015. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda at the global level, there is a need to similarly renew the vision and agenda for regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, taking into account the roles of all regionally focused collaboration mechanisms and the im-

portance to maintain an integrated perspective on the totality of the SDG agenda. Therefore, CBSS mandated the Baltic University Programme to write the report *Assessing the status of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea region: a macro-regional perspective* that was launched in December 2015. In the report not so many linkages are seen between educational and learning to achieving a more sustainable BSR as well as linkages between education and the new SDGs, but it clearly indicates a need for collaboration among stakeholders both within a nation as well as cross-border around the Baltic Sea.

AGENDA 21 FOR EDUCATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION – BALTIC 21E (2002)

The Baltic21E report focused on collaboration with countries around the Baltic Sea as well as clear planning of implementation at all formal educational settings – both in the short term as well as the longer term, based on international strategies such as those mentioned in chapter 2. In the clarification notes it also defined categories of learning that were taken from the Memorandum on Lifelong-learning 2000 that could be relevant to stress even for this report, namely:

- Formal learning takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognised diplomas and qualifications.
- Non-formal learning takes place alongside mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalised certificates. Non-formal learning may be provided at the workplace and through the activities of civil

society organisations and groups (such as youth organisations, trade unions and political parties). It can also be provided through organisations or services that have been set up to complement formal systems (such as art, music and sports classes or private tutoring to prepare for examinations).

→ Informal learning is a natural accompaniment to everyday life. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not necessarily intentional learning, and as such may not even be recognised by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills.

The Baltic 21E agenda could be seen as an additional goal to the Baltic 21 agenda, specifically addressing the educational sector. The agenda gave clear goals for the overall education as well as more precise goals for schools, higher education as well as non-formal education. The agenda was structured around five “action areas” namely

- a) Policies and strategies
- b) Competence development within the education sector
- c) Continuing education
- d) Teaching and learning resources
- e) Research on and the development of education for sustainable development.

In the agenda it is stated that the initiative to create Baltic 21E was taken by the Ministers of Education within BSR. The outcomes should be reported regularly. So far no official reports have been published. When the UNECE Strategy for ESD was established in 2004 the Baltic21E sort of vanished at the same time.



There are several different networks in the BSR that collaborate across country boundaries. Most of them are mainly focusing within their own interest area. Few connect different sectors in society to collaboratively address SD issues and/or challenges within society as the BSRESND aim and focus is.

Union of the Baltic Cities Sustainable Cities Commission is one of the thematic commissions of the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC). UBC is a voluntary, proactive network mobilising the shared potential of its member cities for the democratic, economic, social, cultural and environmentally sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region. It has around 100 different member cities around the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Sea Project initiated by UNESCO in 1990. It's a network around the Bal-

with ESD, mainly in the formal educational setting.

Baltic University Programme, BUP: is a network of about 225 universities and other institutes of higher learning throughout the Baltic Sea Region. The network is coordinated by the Baltic University Programme Secretariat, a part of the Uppsala Centre for Sustainable Development (Uppsala CSD), at Uppsala University, Sweden.

The Learning Teacher Network: international with representatives in BSR countries, Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine. The network is an independent, international network association, which unites professionals in the ambition of creating front-line and sustainable strategies for and approaches to teaching and learning. Their last seminar in Edinburgh, November 2015, was titled “Capacity Building for Educational Action in ESD”.

3.

COUNTRY CONTEXTS; OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

To be able to implement this project in a long term sustainable way we need to look at our various national contexts to see what will have the biggest impact at a country/regional/local level. This project is about building capacity: capacity and competences of individuals, acting in various positions, contexts and organisations, and the capacity of organisations and institutions. Therefore, the ESD/SD context of each and every country included in this project needs to be highlighted in order to develop resilient structures in the best way, in this case, at a local or regional level, call it from a Bottom-up approach. In this case CSOs play a significant role at a regional and/or local level as drivers of learning, educational and awareness raising regarding SD issues both within the non-formal and informal learning-settings as well as formal educational settings.

But one has to be aware that contextual conditions are constantly changing and vary from country to country. Therefore, the findings of today may be outdated tomorrow. The world of today is rapidly changing, and the issues that are most needed to address today may change tomorrow. That is seen not least in Europe these days, when the Migration of the world, suddenly changed direction and is now a challenge for European standards that urgently need to be addressed. Therefore it becomes even more important to establish resilient, well-functioning, local hubs that could be nodes for quick response to changing societal conditions. This survey of a country context situation does not cover the total overall picture but, it gives indicators of the situation of today regarding addressing the SDGs, GAP on ESD and SD that could be taken into consideration

when making suggestions and reflections for the BSRESNDN project *Local Research and Education Hubs – key for sustainable education* in chapter 5.

3.1 Belarusian context

“The National Strategy of Social and Economic Sustainable Development of the Republic of Belarus till 2030” was adopted In February 2015. The contents of this Strategy correlate with the SDGs. The main responsible entity for the strategy is the Ministry of Economy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for addressing SDGs action in Belarus. In order to unite these actions the “Express UN -70 in support of the SDGs” was created in October, 2015.

“Express UN -70 in support of the SDGs” is a common initiative of the UN office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the support from the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Belarus. It was a specially organised train which passed through the main Belarusian regions to raise awareness about the SDGs. Also during this activity the Belarusian bodies, NGOs and UN agencies presented their work to the people in Belarus. The deputy Chairmen of each Regional Executive Committee have signed SDGs Declaration, which has also been signed by the Government.

One important way to provide educational tools and communication between different regions and sectors to address SD is through ESD. For this purpose the ESD Coordination Council has been created at the Minis-

try of Education. Currently several SD actions are being done at a national level: educational standards, university and professional schools curricula are being upgraded.

At the same time there is an integration of SD into education in schools. Changes in the school system are the result of particular schools and teachers’ activities supporting SD ideas promotion in everyday lifestyle at local communities. Such schools have created a Partnership Network of SD Schools which unites their activities due to different educational and youth projects. The Partnership Network unites 15 Resource Centres and nearly 200 schools from different Belarus regions. The network initiated the Education for Sustainable Development Association in July, 2014.

The ESD Association is a platform, which unites different ESD subjects: there are 24 legal entities from different regions of Belarus (2 universities, 3 institutions of additional education for adults, 15 schools, 3 vocational schools, 1 NGO) today. The main focus for the ESD Association is as follows: research and organisation of ESD practices for different generations; educational and organisational support for youth and pedagogical initiatives for SD in regions and local communities; contribution to professional development of the ESD Association participants; organisation of international cooperation between Belarusian and international ESD practitioners and the inclusion of Belarusian educators into GAP on ESD.

There are several networks, NGOs, CSOs working with ESD and SD issues such as the Association of Additional Education and Enlightenment, Green Schools supported by EU/

UNDP, the association “Green Network” which unites environmental organisations (about 12) and individuals actively working in the field of SD, ESD, Ecopartnership, and the Centre for Environment Solutions among others.

Despite efforts made to address ESD and SD issues there are still challenges in terms of ESD practices such as:

- How can the implementation of the various policies developed be collectively managed to solve SD issues?
- How can ESD practices be included into the processes of solving SD issues solving and achieving the SDGs in a regional/local context?
- What kind of infrastructure is needed to provide successful communication between the authorities, people and community to connect SD ideas with everyday lifestyle and production?

To be able to respond to these questions one has to find resources for overcoming the problems of recognising ESD as a mechanism for SD; recognising the role of human potential in the processes of SD; to bridge the absence of any coordinated strategy ensuring ESD practices into all levels of education (from pre-school to adult education); to bridge the lack of understanding of the close connection of ESD as a unified set of practices in formal, non-formal and informal education such as sustainable everyday lifestyle; to bridge the unawareness of ESD as a mechanism for SD; to bridge the non-recognition of non-formal and informal education practices as an integral part of ESD; to bridge the low professional readiness of educators to be effective drivers of ESD practices for all generations.

The main focus for the Associations’ activities is to ensure the implementation of SDG4. The first step in this direction was through experience gained during UN Decade of ESD. The collective monograph “Education for Sustainable Development in Belarus: Theory and Practice” was published in 2015. The next steps are to organise an international symposium “Education for sustainable development for all generations: a social contract” in February 2016 and to establish a National Coordination Centre on ESD at the Belarusian State Pedagogical University.

3.2 Estonian context

In 2005 the *Estonian National Strategy on Sustainable Development – Estonia 21* was approved by the Estonian Parliament that also supports the Sustainable Development Law adopted in 1995. The Ministry of Environment is the entity to mainly gather statistics of the SD implementation and the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for reporting to the UN on SD. The National SD Commission, established in 1996, today working at the Government Office, consists of 23 umbrella non-governmental organisations to analyse public policies from an SD point of view. The target for the SD Commission is to incorporate the SDGs into its policy recommendations.

From 2002, a cross-curricular topic “Environment and sustainable development” is included in the National School Curriculum. In May 2005, A bi-lateral agreement was signed between the Ministers of Education & Science

and of the Environment, declaring ESD as a priority. Today, one of the eight horizontal issues in the secondary school curricula updated in 2011 is related to sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development is managed by two ministries. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for extra-curricular activities that support the cross-curriculum theme “Environment and Sustainable Development”. There are over 30 nature houses across the country managed by the Environmental Board and State Forest Management Centre. There are also a few environmental education centres managed by the municipalities. More than 70 NGOs provide ESD programmes for schools and teachers. With regards to ESD there are no specific policy documents at the moment and no indications of who should be responsible for GAP on ESD. There is a need for a coordinated discussion of learning and teaching ESD as well as of initial and in-training services for teachers and/or others wanting to deal with the complexity of Educating for Sustainable Development.

However, a larger public debate and discussion on ESD and SD issues is also needed. The media need to be involved as well, because SD issues are too wide and complex to be left to the schools. SD encompasses challenges of resource management and environment protection to challenges related to social and economic equity and inclusion and maintaining the ecosystem services. There is a need for broadening the discussion and communication to grasp an understanding of how the global development issues are connected to peoples’ own lives, especially among and together with different sectors and groups.

Within Estonia there are several NGOs who

separately and/or in networks deal with issues to strengthen and build a more sustainable and resilient local community such as think-tanks like Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre and PRAXIS, and NGOs such as Eco-Communities Association of Estonia, Animal Rights Protection Organisation, Loomus, Social Enterprise Association, Statera, etc.

3.3 Finnish context

In Finland there are several strategy documents, both for ESD as well as around SD issues. The *Sustainable Development in Education, Implementation of Baltic 21E Programme and Finnish Strategy for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014)* were adopted in 2006 the very same year as the Finnish national strategy for sustainable development *Towards sustainable choices – A nationally and globally sustainable Finland*. The strategy was revised in 2014 with an emphasis on society’s commitment to sustainability: *The Finland We Want 2050*. There are also several national climate strategies.

The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development is responsible for adapting the SDGs into Finland’s national policies. The commission is chaired by the Prime Minister, and has broad participation from societal actors and stakeholders, such as the parliament, ministries, municipalities and regions, business, unions, education, NGO’s, church and science.

The Commission’s section on education and the Ministry of Education has a goal that all Finnish schools have an action plan for SD

(35% by 2012). In addition, 15% of the schools have an external certification of their work in the sphere of sustainable development (target year 2014). The certification is carried out by the OKKA-foundation or via the Green Flag programme, for different educational institutions. The OKKA Foundation is a foundation for teaching, education and personal development supporting the educational sector. At the end of 2015 close to 90 institutions had received this certification. Also the international Eco-Schools programme is running in Finland as a Vihreä Lippu (Green Flag) programme by the Association for Environmental Education; more than 300 kindergartens, schools, vocational schools and educational organisations for children and youths participate, reaching about 100 000 persons.

Society's Commitment to Sustainability was initiated by the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and launched in 2014. By establishing their operational commitments, different actors will do their part to implement society's commitment to sustainable development, "The Finland we want by 2050". Society commitments 2050 are part of the national implementation of the UN Rio+20 process. The commitments will be recorded on a web-based database, where their progress will also be monitored with the help of indicators. Finland has a long tradition in using indicators: the first set of sustainable development indicators were published in 2000.

The cooperatively developed framework assures both the business sector and regular citizens are working towards the same goals. Anyone can take action in order to start promoting our shared goals and bridging the current sustainability gap, which concerns not

only our economy, but the carrying capacity of nature and social sustainability as well. By January 2016 more than 220 commitments to sustainability were made. According to a survey (2015) four out of five operators that have made society commitments reported that their implementation has benefited their organisation and that *sustainable development is now understood to mean concrete measures*.

Finland has recently completed the reform of the National Core Curricula for pre-primary education and for compulsory basic education, and upper secondary education, after which the local education authorities and schools work with the local curricula. Schools will start working according to the new curricula in autumn 2016. Sustainable development is included in this reform as an integrated theme. The objectives of the renewal include defining educational values and principles so that they are based on supporting the versatile growth of pupils, strengthening their identities, give them the knowledge and skills, and a learning environment that promotes sustainable development. The same applies to vocational education, which finished its curricular reform earlier. In vocational education SD is also seen as an integral part of the institution's quality system. Recently a web-based system has been developed for self-evaluation, supporting the integration of SD in work-based learning, education and quality assessment.

Enhanced sustainable development is one of the tasks for non-formal education according to the Act on Liberal Adult Education (21.8.1998/632). The first non-formal education institutes get the certificates for the sustainable development in 2014 by the OKKA Foundation. The criteria for certification

were accepted in 2013. A self-assessment tool is under development.

The sector-overbridging ESD issues are discussed at the meetings of the (informal) working group on ESD within the Ministry of Education and Culture 2 – 3 times per year.

ESD-related, sector overbridging, is also the RCE Espoo, which so far is the only one in Finland. However, there are many projects and processes ongoing where cities, regions, organisations and private persons cooperate, and where social learning is an important element. One such example is the joint project Towards Resource Wisdom (2013–2015), in which Sitra (a fund operating directly under the Finnish Parliament) and the City of Jyväskylä developed an operating model through which cities and municipalities can promote the wise use of natural resources and create the preconditions for sustainable well-being. This operating model was piloted in Forssa, Lappeenranta and Turku in spring 2015, by drawing up a resource wisdom road map for each city.

At present there is no entity which is designated as the national GAP/ESD-node. However, in spring 2016, this as well as the overall implementation of the SDGs will be discussed.

3.4 Latvian context

In June 2010 the Government of Latvia, SAEI-MA of the Republic of Latvia, launched the *Latvia 2030 – Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030* carried out through a large consultation process led by the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Govern-

ment including experts and different stakeholders in society. The strategy is divided into 7 priority areas. Priority area 3 has the title Change of Paradigm in Education. It stresses the need to make lifelong learning available from preschool to further adult education. This is neither defined as ESD nor as the E in connection to SD. Even the concept of SD is randomly mentioned and is not formally introduced in the national curriculum. What is known is that the Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre, (Pārresoru Coordination Centre of the Prime Minister), an administration institution with the aim to provide mutual consistency and compliance with laws and regulations of national level planning documents, convened a cross-institutional meeting with various ministries' representatives to discuss how to best integrate the new SDGs in their Agendas. In June 2016 Latvia will arrange a European Sustainable Development Week, a European-wide initiative to stimulate and make visible activities, projects and events that promote sustainable development and the SDGs. The event is supposed to be arranged annually.

Latvia does not have a national strategy for ESD as such. According to the Education Development Guidelines 2014–2020 of the Republic of Latvia, the main goal of the education development policy is high-quality and inclusive education for personal development, human welfare, and reaching sustainable national growth. There are also different CSO bodies such as Centre for Education Development, IAC, promoting Global Education. Global Education seems to be the concept that has had the biggest impact in the Latvian context. It is mainly NGOs and CSOs within the Latvian Platform for Development Coop-

eration that has introduced the concept Global education into the school curriculum as well as within teacher education. However there is an issue as regards Global Education since some areas prefer to call it Development Education. At some points it is also called Global Development Education, depending on what stakeholders are involved. There is also a report, launched in 2014, on *Education for All – National review of the Republic of Latvia* prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science.

For implementing the GAP/ESD it is foreseen that UNESCO in Riga at the Ministry of Education will be the national entity to define how to implement the GAP/ESD. As a reflection a need is foreseen to integrate ESD throughout all educational settings, whether formal or non-formal as well as cross sectoral cooperation at various levels in society.

The impact of CSOs, such as the project DEAR (development education and awareness raising), funded by European Aid, which has actively worked within primary and secondary schools to introduce GE as an educational tool to enable young people to participate in shaping a better, shared future for the world, play a key role in new educational tools and methods to address SD issues. Also methodology sources, mainly within GE, have been created by NGOs to support teachers in their teaching. Also, a sort of global/local, glocalisation methodology has been worked out for leaders at local communities, public organisations, and education institutions, formal and informal groups. LAPAS has used this methodology in both activities during the Latvia Presidency 2015 and in EYD2015.

Different networks have sprung from a bot-

tom-up perspective such as Direct Purchase groups (people buying from eco-communes instead of going to big shopping centres). To emphasise the importance of including NGOs and CSOs into development issues the platform LAPAS was established in 2004.

There is an issue within the Latvian context with regards to power-structures, and cultural division mainly due to language, Latvian speaking and Russian speaking citizens. However, the Russian speaking community, mainly youth and the non-formal sector are involved in GE discussions. The discussions have been organised by the NGO JASMA. However, it could be an unused opportunity for Latvia's society to bring together Latvian and Russian speaking communities, maybe through the tool GE.

3.5 Lithuanian context

In the National Development Plan for 2014 - 2020 (NDP), approved by the Government in November 2012, sustainable development was identified as a horizontal priority for the entire document. The NDP was coordinated with the "Europe - 2020" strategy, the EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In the NDP, the development of specific territories (local development) was identified as the key policy area where cross-sectoral cooperation and multiple stakeholder involvement were seen as necessary. Focus was paid to increasing the role of communities and stimulating their cooperation with local/national authorities and business. At the same time, the Government should support initiatives by communities and

their participation in decision-making concerning local development strategies, solving socio-economic problems and the pro-active preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

The development of the education system is present as a component of NDP and could be characterised by the following keywords: student-orientated education; a shift from knowledge-based to competence-based curricula including transformative competences compatible with ESD such as creativity, entrepreneurship, etc.; a holistic, cross-disciplinary approach; connection to real-life problems; and, creativity and entrepreneurship. The ESD cross-curriculum as a part of the National Curriculum for basic school (5-10 grades) was introduced from 2008.

A Lithuanian “Education for All” Action Plan was developed in 2003 by the National Education Forum, NEF, for “Education for All”, a non-governmental community under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and Science of Lithuania. However NEF already closed in 2004 and the issue of ESD was not included in the agenda or discussed by NEF. The Ministry of Education and Science used to prepare formal reports according to UNESCO’s Education for All programme (the last one was issued in 2015 for 2014) including everything about education in Lithuania. However nothing is mentioned with regards to the MDGs, SDGs, GAP/ESD or Global Education, etc. in the concluding remarks on education beyond 2015.

There are also projects on Global Education. In 2013 the “Lithuanian Development Education and Cooperation Network of Non-governmental Institutions – Association LITDEA”

together with the Association “Lithuanian National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations’ Platform” wrote “Global Education in Lithuania – Challenges and Opportunities” with recommendations on how to develop Global Education within Lithuania. However, the recommendations were not integrated into the national strategies (as mentioned above).

With regards to the new SDGs, the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Foreign Affairs have indicated that the SDGs should be integrated into the EU policies first and then into the national policy documents. The GAP/ESD is not yet officially launched but there are ideas to cooperate with the UNESCO National Commission for quality assurance in higher education for promoting ESD as a whole institution approach, and the improvement of qualification of university teachers. But this is just a separate initiative, not at a national or strategic level.

There are few NGOs or CSOs identified in Lithuania for the purpose of this document. There is a movement called Let’s Do It or Mes Darom with the aim to clean up all illegally dumped waste to keep the planet clean. It organises an annual event. And there is a Lithuanian National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations’ Platform that unites 21 Lithuanian non-governmental organisations working in the field of development cooperation. Lithuania also has one Regional Centre of Expertise, RCE.

3.6 Polish context

There is a Board of Sustainable Development that was set up in 2002, which serves as a consultative body to the Prime Minister on all issues related to SD. It is chaired by the Ministry of Environment and includes members from public administration and civil society. Since 2009, reforms to improve the Polish strategic document have taken place and different strategies have been developed such as the Long-term Development Strategy 2030 (coordinated by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister), the Mid-term Development Strategy 2020 (coordinated by the Ministry of Regional Development) including 9 integrated strategies. The Ministry of Environment has published a strategy for sustainable development for Poland until 2025. In 2001 the Ecological Education Strategy was created and coordinated by the Ministry of Environment. For this report there are no indications of any strategies for ESD or who should be responsible for GAP/ESD.

One of the biggest needs is to introduce Sustainable Development into educational curricula nationwide. There is also a need for teacher training in using methods and ESD-related educational tools. In 2014, the NGO Global Action Plan Poland, a sister organisation of the British Global Action Plan under the umbrella of Global Action Plan International, which focuses on teacher training, conducting workshops, and promoting sustainable lifestyle and ecological behaviour; they also launched a project called 'Water Researcher'. Its objective is to teach pupils 6 – 13 years old respect towards the natural resource of water and they

do so through festivals nationwide in schools. A need is also seen to emphasise lobbying for policies to introduce Sustainable Development concepts into the curricula of Higher Education Institutions.

Society's knowledge of sustainable development is generally seen as rather poor and an urgent need to address. One way of gaining a change of attitude towards a more sustainable lifestyle in general within society could be to support and include CSO and use campaigns as a tool to reach out to society about SD issues or addressing the SDGs. Local governments should be educated about sustainable development through workshops for example.

Moreover, many coal mines operating in Poland should be encouraged to think about more eco-friendly solutions and more financial support should be given from the government to look for alternative sources of energy in the country and set up energy sources coming from reusable resources.

There are some small but rather poorly promoted organisations within education such as the Partners in Education project (co-operating with organisations in Hungary and the USA) and the Foundation for Education about SD GAJA. There are also a few organisations dealing with SD issues, such as the Association for Poland's SD, the Foundation for SD ZMINY KLIMATU and the Sustainable Development Workstation (see web-links under References).

3.7 Russian context

With regards to the SDGs, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at the UN General Assembly on 27 September 2015 that Russia stood committed to the new 2030 Development Agenda but that “coercive measures” imposed in violation of the UN Charter, were going in direct contradiction to its aims. Although this report did not find indications on how Russia nationally should deal with addressing the SDG domestically.

However there is a report from 2012 called *“Report on Implementing the Principles of Sustainable Development in the Russian Federation. Russian Outlook on the new paradigm for sustainable development. Preparing for “RIO+20”* prepared by the Interagency Working Group of experts on Russia’s participation in the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20), Advisor to the President of the Russian Federation.” This report contains indications of the national progress in achieving the MDGs.

In 2013 a report was published by the German-Russian Exchange Berlin and the Russian-German Bureau for Environmental Information and prepared by a team of three editors and over 20 authors from different regions of Russia called Sustainable Development in Russia, mainly concentrating on environmental-economic issues.

With regards to ESD and/or GAP/ESD, no legal framework could be found. There is a national strategy for ESD developed by a working expert group of several Universities saying “ESD envisages the reorientation of attention in teaching from providing knowledge to

working through and searching for possible solutions. Even while maintaining traditional approaches to teaching in individual institutions, there should also be support for multifaceted, inter-disciplinary analysis of real life situations. Such changes facilitate the adjustment of programmes of study and teaching methods, requiring teachers to reject their role as exclusively transmitters of knowledge and students to shed their role as simply receivers of information.” However so far, as known, the strategy has not been adopted in any legal national framework.

There has been a new federal educational standard adopted recently requiring meta-skills and interdisciplinary competences to be taught that will be measured in the results as well as content of knowledge. However, there is a lack of in-service training for the teachers to be able to apply those methods and it is not focusing on competences to support sustainable development as such. There is also a lack of national system to support and implement ESD at an institutional level and a lack of common understanding of the concept ESD can be seen. Tension has also been seen between Environment Education and ESD and in the beginning of the UNDESD the concept of ESD became somewhat fashionable to use even though the content in itself could not be seen as ESD as such.

However, there are good initiatives and projects carried out at a federal or regional level; it is mainly CSOs and individual initiative groups within educational and research institutions and organisations doing so, but they lack the support from the Government. Tens of projects of different sizes have been carried out during the years of moving from environ-

mental education to education for sustainable development. They have had an impact in changing the understanding of ESD and have also changed educational practice. Many of them were carried out with a small amount of resources and had no impact on a wider systematic change country wise, it was more at a local or regional level such as the Environmental centre of St. Petersburg Water company, which runs projects for school students regarding topics related to green urbanism as well as the Baltic Sea environment (with a focus on the interrelationships between nature, society and the economy). The projects include training and materials for both students and teachers and were created by the Environment centre of St. Petersburg Water company as a model for ESD.

One should bear in mind that Russia is very much a top-down ruled country and if there is no support or push from the Government then it is not easy to implement successfully. One has to also mention that there are differences among NGOs in the country; those that work in close contact with the authorities, mainly in “non-conflict projects” and those working “in opposition” that might influence the implementation of education and learning from an ESD perspective.

3.8 Ukrainian context

There are no official national strategies for implementing the SDGs or GAP/ESD yet. Despite Ukrainian high level officials and a number of NGOs participating in SD processes and despite the preparation of several drafts

for national SD strategy by scientists, none of them have so far been adopted as official strategies. Nevertheless, relevant fragments thereof have been included into the National environmental strategy and Action Plan, energy strategy, agricultural strategy etc.

There is a new “Strategy for sustainable development – Ukraine 2020”, approved by the President in January 2015, however the strategy does not give incentives on how it is to be implemented and there is no wording such as ESD, the educational part of addressing SD issues.

There is a body at the Ministry of Environment called State Ecological Academy of Postgraduate Education and management coordinating ESD, but no official appointment has been made. At the State Ecological Academy of Postgraduate Education webpage the concept of a regional system of education for SD from year 2012 is presented, but it was not officially approved. The State Ecological Academy also prepared a national report for the UNDESD Nagoya conference, but it was never discussed before reporting or after, and it was never published.

However, the lack of sufficient coordination of ESD at the national level is largely compensated by the efforts of the authorities at the local regional level. In many areas (cities) of Ukraine where it has been introduced, local concepts for SD and numerous projects for regional (local) sustainable development have now been implemented applying the best practices of resource saving, democratic governing, improving the environment etc.. The activities under the Carpathian Convention are one such good example.

Many universities are developing interesting projects on ESD at the level of bachelor's and master's degrees, to create the appropriate departments and groups. More than 5,000 teachers are teaching the new subject "Lessons for Sustainable Development" at secondary school level and non-formal and informal ESD centres are gradually developing in different regions.

CSOs, for example Green Dossier and Teachers for Democracy and Partnership, actively participate in international SD processes and are part of international networks and projects, producing and disseminating useful literature, creating good practices and cooperating with educational institutions. One project is run by TDP and GAP International Sweden, aiming at developing curricula and training material related to sustainability for upper primary and lower secondary schools. In fact civil society in Ukraine is now the main driving force for changing and modernisation in all spheres of everyday life in Ukraine, CSOs unite ESD and SD experts in all fields and are able to lobby and influence governmental decisions. However there is still a need for a general understanding of both the ESD as well as SD concept that needs to be integrated in learning programmes both within formal and informal learning settings. There is also a need to connect research, practitioners and experts cross-sectoral, cross-border, to promote good examples of ESD and SD as well as give awareness of the global processes and connect them to each and everyone's everyday life. It is a need for changing attitudes and behaviour for a more sustainable society. It is a crucial need for connecting fragmental activities, cooperate between institutions in civil society, to work, promote, raise awareness and

do more effective advocacy work for ESD at Parliament/ Government level.

4.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTIONS

The aim of having an international, national and local context understanding of ESD is to bring together the different levels of interventions that in some cases are conflicting and work in parallel instead of bringing synergy.

As is seen in the above section of the country reports, different countries do have different strategies with regards to SD but not so much E strategies to address SD issues; others do not have national frameworks and/or policies at all, and in some cases, those strategies are unclear or integrated in other sectoral policies, making the SD and ESD issues difficult to identify and work towards at a local level. It is also interesting to look at what Ministries take the lead in the SD and/or ESD policies defined. When it comes to SD issues and the SDGs, in Belarus for example, it is the Ministry of Foreign affairs taking the initiative while the ministry

of education is only concerned with the formal education of sustainable development to the detriment of the in-formal or non-formal education frames.

The geographic definition of the Baltic Sea Region varies as well as which countries that could be referred as “collaborative neighbouring” countries to it. In this report it is seen that Ukraine is often not defined as such a country. This could have an effect while searching for funding but, for the BSRES DN, it is foreseen that Ukraine should be included in the BSRES DN work and find its value in sharing experiences.

The difficulty in navigating through all the different concepts of education for sustainable development has been discussed and one can wonder if there is confusion among the ESD

practitioners - what about the lay people that are not working with or active in ESD? It is clear that the type of educational frame used in the different countries is very much connected with funding opportunities, mainly at an EU level. It is equally important to note that, at the EU level, ESD has not been mainstreamed within educational policies. In this report, it can be concluded that, there are many varieties of educational frames/ concepts more or less aiming in the same direction, towards a more sustainable society. Those concepts should be used where they best serve their purpose and as far as this report reflects, it is not a contradiction to use all of them under the umbrella of ESD. The most important insight though is to define an educational tool that increases skills in handling complex challenges, systems and possibilities where the aim should be to build competences within individuals in addressing holistic issues from a local context. But the educational tools have to be defined context-wise; what concepts will work best out of the local SD issues (that could be transferred into SDG) to deal with; who are the change agents to engage as drivers to address the challenges; who are the other stakeholders to involve etc.?

Through the questionnaire a lot of useful information was gained, more information than could be used for this report. Hopefully the selection of information made may be as seen relevant for the purpose of this report. However, the total amount of information gave a sense of the various country contexts, useful when trying to grasp and reduce the total information obtained.

A key issue that repeatedly came up was the need to create urgency and a change in attitude in regards to SD issues, but also to understand

the importance of good educational tools to address the SD challenges. Many respondents also saw a lack of communication from national to local level and vice versa. In many cases there were defined national strategies (mainly within SD issues) but no indications of how they should be implemented all through society down to a local level.

During the writing of this report the issue of expanding the two main objectives for the GAP/ESD came up. (see page 9) to also include:

- c) to favour multi-stakeholder approach used in decision making,
- d) to strengthen transdisciplinary dimension and civic engagement within a local community.

Since the project *Local Research and Education Hubs – key for sustainable education* aims at strengthening actors at local/regional level and make stakeholders collaborate, the above suggestions could definitely be useful objectives for project implementation. The importance of local actors, CSOs, NGOs, media, business sector and civil society at large is seen all through this report verifying the aim of establishing local/ regional hubs to strengthen sustainable development.

Another reflection that has been made over time, not just for this report, but also throughout the existence of the BSRESND; So far it has mainly been women involved both as representatives for partners as well as participating in the various activities carried out since 2012. Could working with ESD and /or education be seen as a gender issue? Is it therefore about time to highlight and advocate for strengthen-

ing the role of education and the importance of good education in society and to empowering teachers to be agents of change, not objects of change as is often the case?

It has also been suggested to change the aim with the BSRESND, from work cross-border, cross-sectoral, to maybe increase the collaboration and define it as trans-border, trans-sectoral, trans-disciplinary to further, and emphasise collaboration even more. According to Dr Simon Priest, Chief executive officer at TEAMWORK.com, TRANSdisciplinary could be defined as “Everyone working on the same problem by transcending disciplinary boundaries drawing on non-traditional perspectives cross-fertilising assumptions/restrictions resolving contradictory points of view” and he argues “Transdisciplinary collaboration is my preference for solving our world’s current and future big problems, simply because we have less of it (and more interdisciplinary cooperation) these days. I believe many solutions will be crowd-sourced in virtual maker-spaces. By this, I mean people from all disciplines and no particular disciplines will come together through online environments to solve problems. Some will cooperate in connectives and come up with a few disruptive innovations. Others will have coordinators and collaborate in collectives to find a few co-creative innovations. Hopefully, such sourcing, from this crowd of people applying transdisciplinary collaboration, may result in solutions to the world’s current problems like climate change “

In conclusion, this chapter emphasised the involvement of all actors from all sectors in order to meet the SDG goals. It also involved issues highlighting the use of GAP on ESD frames in achieving the said SDGs from an

international level “down” to a local level. The next chapter, 5, will present its suggestions for how to best frame the implementation of the project out of the findings in this investigation.

Although, as has been mentioned earlier, we have to be aware that the conditions of today may change tomorrow at all levels; internationally, the EU, Baltic Sea Region, country wise as well as on a country region level and on a country local level. We also have to be aware, as this report shows, that we are at different levels and have different contexts for how to address the SDGs and incorporate GAP on ESD in our work. Therefore, whatever is being decided for the project *Local Research and Education Hubs – key for sustainable education* it has to be open enough to be reshaped or reevaluated to meet the needs of the specific regional context.

5.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BSRES DNS FOCUS TO BUILD CAPACITIES FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

First of all, it is necessary to understand and be aware of the differences each country have when defining best practice for the implementation of the project *Local Research and Education Hubs – key for sustainable education*. We will not be able to define THE ultimate approach. The hubs need to be established in an innovative and flexible way so it suits each and everyone's local context.

We also have to be aware that to establish such hub requires a good process. It is of utmost importance to develop mutual respect for each hub member and break through old power-balances when working in a group for a common cause. There are several team-building processes that could be used.

How to define the geographically area for a local region for a hub?

There has been some confusion since a region could be defined in many different ways (such as BSR as such). As a suggestion it should be a region where it is possible to reach each other during the day (as is defined for RCEs, see 5.1). But maybe the definition of a region has to vary, depending on different conditions.

Who should be engaged in the hub?

Here the projects partners play a key role in starting up the process of inviting key-actors within the region to define this specific hubs key issues and role. When going through such

process of defining both content as well as other stakeholders requires time and efforts to get the right actors on-board as well as defining the SDGs to address. It should be considered getting a diverse hub with different skills and competences to complement each other's in a good way and empower stakeholders.

What do we foresee happening within the hubs?

This report suggests that the partnership for the project should act as facilitators of establishing the hubs BUT the content of it should be defined by the local partners that want and should be part of the hub. However, since we have defined the SDGs as the national framework, the hubs should deal with addressing and defining; what are the local SDGs to deal with? Since the international community has defined all countries to address the SDGs, this is a golden opportunity to become spearheads for doing so and that could be arguments for getting support, nationally for making the hubs long-term sustainable even after this project has ended.

What learning and education need to take place to address the SDGs?

To address the educational part on how to reach the SDGs, this report suggests each hub to use the matrix in chapter 2.4 to a) define what SDGs that are an issue in the specific region b) what educational tools should be used to address the SDGs in a good way (it might be both formal, non-formal as well as informal learning settings. This should be done in combination with UNESCO's *Roadmap for implementing the Global Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development*.

Research?

The title for the project is *Local Research and Education Hubs – key for sustainable education*, indicates we should have a research component within each hub. Universities should be involved in each hub to give suggestions for research that is both already existing, useful for the hub as well as suggest research on, for instance, the learning taking place in the hub, call it action research or even integrated research.

For a hub or a team to collaborate and work together, in a good way, it needs good facilitation to establish an inclusive and representative multi-stakeholder hub/team that gives equal opportunities for participants and co-create knowledge to be able to address issues related to the SDGs at a local/ regional level. There are several worldwide concepts and methods for multi-stakeholder collaboration such as Learning for Change, <http://www.globalactionplan.com/l4c>, developed by Global Action Plan International (in collaboration with SWEDESD) and also within *Building a Resilient Future through Multistakeholder Learning and Action*, chapter 2, 5 and 10 focus on multistakeholder collaboration and best practices, http://www.rce-network.org/portal/sites/default/files/public_resource/01_UNU_10yearsBook_web.pdf

Another toolkit developed for the BSR is the Baltic Leadership Programme, - Communications Toolkit within the EUSBSR, <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/attachments/article/590736/BLP%20Communications%20Toolkit%2018Dec15.pdf>

One other suggestion is to use insights from the Inquiry Based Approach (IBA) facilitation, developed by SWEDESD that deals with wicked situations. While using the IBA it also

includes defining the inquiries to address. In this case, it will probably be several issues to deal with, but, the IBA gives tools for defining a relevant issue/question as well as continue the process of defining what other stakeholders there are that should be engaged as well. Although, still, if using the IBA, it still needs to be aware that this approach might have to be adjusted to fit the context it should be working within.

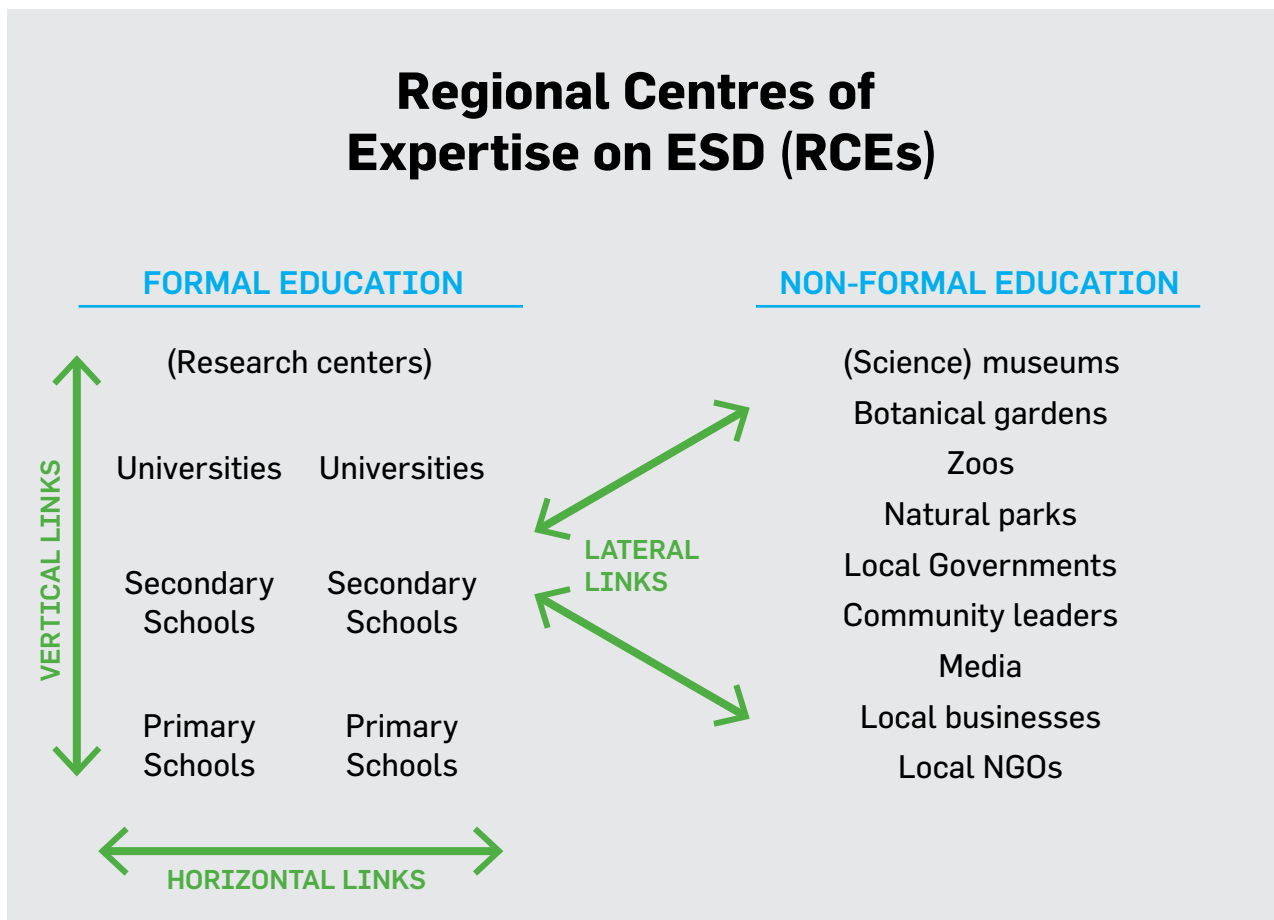
ANNEX 1

Regional Centers of Expertise, RCEs

Below one suggestion for an international recognized format of a hub framed as a Regional Center of Expertise, RCE. The concept, if used

in an innovative way, could be a driving force for combining education and addressing the SDGs.

Regional Centers of Expertise, RCEs is a tool for transformation to a more sustainable



One example of collaborative links of a Regional Centers of Expertise (UNU- IAS). How an RCE is formed depends very much on the different actors in the specific region, who could/should be involved as well as want to be engaged and involved. For more information, <http://www.rce-network.org/portal/>

society, combining education and action for sustainable development. RCEs reaffirm their commitment to improving their systems of governance and quality of their actions. They are committed to expanding their collaboration with as wide a number of stakeholders as possible. RCEs are dedicated to building their capacities to plan and implement collaborative ESD projects critical for establishing a global learning space. Capacity development will be viewed as a transformative learning process, generated from within the RCE network. RCEs will put sustainable development issues into a scientific and social context, provide a constructive critique and help to develop new policies, program and projects. At the same time, RCEs will continue to dedicate themselves to advancing sustainable market opportunities and other sustainable livelihood strategies for all individuals – especially for the most marginalized – to improve human well-being and ecosystem health.

RCEs recognize their position, as grassroots, multistakeholder networks, with capacities for research and innovation that can revitalize education at all levels through flagship projects. As regionally based yet globally connected networks, RCEs form a global learning space on ESD, working to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to learn the values, behaviors and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive social transformation.

Within the BSRES DN coverage it is found existing RCEs, one in Finland, one in Lithuania, 2 in Russia, one in Denmark, 4 in Sweden that could all be found on following webpage <http://www.rce-network.org/portal/>.

ANNEX 2

The Inquiry Based Approach, IBA provides practical advice and hands-on instructions for those interested in facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration. In the preface of the handbook one could read:

Our globalized world is complex and difficult to govern. There is a growing realization that traditional top-down planning and management approaches are often insufficient. Instead, new forms of governance based on improved collaboration between stakeholders are deemed to carry potential for tackling complex and contested problems.

In order to be successful, such multi-stakeholder processes must be facilitated in a sensible way. Facilitators need to be able to help build trust among stakeholders with different or even opposing views, and to make them see the opportunities that collaboration with others brings. This is challenging. Fortunately, a number of effective methods are being developed in this growing field of research and practice. The demand for people with skills to facilitate multi-stakeholder processes is growing as governmental and non-governmental agencies realize the need for such collaboration

and funding donors demand it to an increasing extent.

Drawing on learning theory and the action research tradition, the IBA revolves around an inquiry, a question that enables collaboration among various stakeholders. Basing the collaboration on an inquiry presents several advantages:

- 1) It facilitates open-ended exploration. In the beginning of an IBA, the multi-stakeholder team defines an inquiry that the stakeholders are all interested in pursuing. Phrasing the inquiry places emphasis on mutual exploration.
- 2) It creates shared ownership. The inquiry is an expression of the mutual interest among stakeholders. The joint development of the inquiry results in shared ownership of the collaboration.
- 3) It enables both co-creation of knowledge and transformation. The inquiry is pursued jointly by the team in cycles of actions and reflections. Thus the collaboration involves both transformation of a wicked situation and co-creation of knowledge.

4) It makes it easier to link the collaboration to ongoing development processes. The multi-stakeholder team phrases the inquiry on the basis of an appraisal of ongoing activities. This allows the stakeholders to ensure that their collaboration is reinforcing ongoing activities rather than creating new, standalone projects.

The IBA is a generic approach that can be tailored to fit a particular wicked situation in a particular context.

ANNEX 3

Questions to be answered regards BSRESNs 3rd phase Sept 2015 – July 2016

In order to make a good analyze of the current situation in the countries Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, Finland and Russia regards to ESD- and SD implementation, we in the BSRESN secretariat would be very happy to get your insights from your countries perspective on below questions. The answers will be analyzed and used as a base for the coming activities we foresee in the BSRESNs project funded by Council of the Baltic Sea States, CBSS.

Please, email me, Susanne Zetterblom, Susanne.zetterblom@swedesd.uu.se if anything is unclear and please answers are appreciated no later than 6th November 2015.

1. Are there any national strategies for implementing the **SDGs** in your country? What institution is responsible if so and what is the main focus in the strategies?
2. Have your country defined a responsible entity to implement the **Global Action Programme**, GAP, launched in Nagoya, November 2014 as the continuation of the Decade on ESD? Who is responsible if so and what is the main focus in the strategies?
3. Are there any other national strategies on **Education for Sustainable Development** in your country? Who is responsible if so and what is the main focus in the strategies?
4. Are there any other national strategies on **Sustainable Development** in your country? Who is responsible if so and what is the main focus in the strategies?
5. What do you foresee as needed to emphasize **education for sustainable development** in your country on a **national level**?
6. What do you foresee as needed to emphasize **sustainable development** in your country on a **national level**?
7. What do you foresee as needed to emphasize **education for sustainable development** in your country on a **regional/local level**?

8. What do you foresee as needed to emphasize **sustainable development** in your country on a **regional/local level**?
9. Are there any **gaps** that need to be addresses either **horizontal** or **vertical** to emphasize **education for sustainable development** in your country?
10. Are there any gaps that need to be addresses either horizontal or vertical to emphasize sustainable development in your country?
11. What do you foresee as the **biggest challenge** in your country to get it focus more on using ESD as a driver for a more sustainable society/country?
12. Are there **other networks in your country** that deal with **ESD**? What networks if so? What is their focus area (formal/ non-formal education, higher education, primary education etc)? How do they work; cross-border? Cross-sectoral? Or sectoral?
13. Are there **other networks in your country** that deal with **SD issues**? What networks if so? What is their focus area (Climate change, Sustainable Consumption & Production etc)? How do they work; cross-border? Cross-sectoral? Or sectoral?
14. **And last but not least**; You have been part of the BSRES DN either as a partner or as a participant in any of the networks activities (conferences, workshops etc). What is your opinion of what has been a success and what is still missing, that you would want the network to focus on in the future?

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ANNEX 1

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ANNEX 2

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