COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES

Marking
25 years
of building
collaboration
and trust

Icelandic Presidency
2016-2017

Realizing the Vision: The Baltic 2030 Action Plan

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List of Acronyms

BSR	Baltic Sea Region
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
EGSD	Expert Group on Sustainable Development
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VASAB	Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea

Preamble

"Realizing the Vision: The Baltic 2030 Action Plan" responds to the mandate, given by the CBSS member states (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Russia) in the Baltic 2030 Declaration of 6 June 2016, to create an action plan of cooperative and synergistic work to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region.

This Action Plan presents a new, ***common vision*** of sustainable development for the Baltic Sea Region. It applies the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals to our macro-regional context and provides a general roadmap for working together — across all countries, sectors, and stakeholders — to achieve them.

This Action Plan is intended to create the framework for spreading recommendations, tools and best practices to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the BSR. In addition to inspiring engagement and action among national governments, it is also intended to address the pan-Baltic stakeholders, sub-regional actors, cities, rural communities and business sector. The Baltic 2030 Action Plan is complementary to the ongoing plans and efforts of the BSR countries and other stakeholders. The Action Plan is broad and aspirational and will be followed by a more detailed discussion about the implementation of the Action Plan

The Baltic 2030 Action Plan encompasses six ***focus areas*** — thematic topics prioritized for regional collaboration — and six ***activation processes***, recommended cooperative activities that will help fill gaps, stimulate greater engagement, and add value to existing regional collaboration efforts.

Climate change is one of these focus areas, and the framework presented in this Action Plan emphasizes low-emission development and climate-resilience, as these remain critical challenges and areas of priority collaboration in the Baltic Sea Region.

This document is a ***universal call to action***, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. By inspiring broad and concerted action, the Action Plan is intended to:

- Reflect the universal and integrated agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Be inclusive of the many regional activities that are already advancing progress on specific aspects of the SDGs
- Add value to those activities by promoting an integrated approach and identifying gaps that need to be filled
- Respect the capacities and financial limitations of public entities, relying not on additional public funding to realize the SDGs, but on a widely-shared mobilization of human, social, and financial resources, from every sector and at every level.

Taken together, the common vision, the priority focus areas, and the activation processes provide a comprehensive framework to support increased and accelerated effort to realize the 2030 Agenda and SDGs throughout our macro-region. The Baltic 2030 Action Plan supports better coordination of sustainable development actions between the countries and encourages the spread of national as well as sub-regional implementation throughout the Baltic Sea Region.

We call on all actors in the Baltic Sea Region — countries and stakeholders, including civil society, young people, business, education, regional and local authorities — to take the "bold and transformative steps" towards sustainable development, which are urgently needed, so that we may achieve this vision by 2030.

A. The International Context

On 25 September 2015, the member states of the United Nations adopted the most ambitious global agreement in human history: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated 169 Targets.
The 2030 Agenda and SDGs were built on a strong foundation: over three decades of international collaboration on sustainable development.

The process started in the mid-1980s with the work of the Brundtland Commission and its foundational book *Our Common Future* (1987), which introduced the concept of sustainable development into the inter-governmental dialogue of the United Nations. This was followed by *Agenda 21*, adopted at the first "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro (1992), which began the process of translating the concept into policy and practice. The Millennium Development Goals (2000) brought the world together around measurable goals for development while the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002) strongly expanded the concept of stakeholder participation, especially to private and civil sectors, in the realization of sustainable development. Finally, at the World Conference on Sustainable Development, in 2012, the international community of nations decided to create a new set of goals that would "address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their inter-linkages" (*The Future We Want*, paragraph 246, 2012).

The 2030 Agenda marks a paradigm shift in the way national governments, in close collaboration with sub-national governments, civil society stakeholders, academia and the private sector, define and pledge to make sustainable development happen. The 17 SDGs represent an integrated, indivisible, and interlinked agenda that can provide incentives and guidance for the development of cross-sectoral solutions. A great deal of work lies ahead in order to define concrete paths for putting this interconnectedness into practice and using an integrated view as a standard aspect of planning, policy-making, funding, and monitoring, at all levels of government.

The text of the 2030 Agenda provides a roadmap for implementation that calls for cross-sectoral, universal engagement, including every sector and every geographic scale. The text of the 2030 Agenda also recognizes the importance of the regional dimension (Paragraph 21):

> We acknowledge also the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development. Regional and sub-regional frameworks can facilitate the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level.[1]

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[1] "Regional" in the 2030 Agenda text refers to a large, multi-nation geographic area and is similar in meaning to "macro-region." "Sub-regional" in the 2030 Agenda refers to any smaller geographic grouping of nations. In contrast, "Sub-regional" in this Action Plan can mean a grouping of nations smaller than the whole Baltic Sea Region, a subnational geographic area, or a contiguous group of subnational geographic areas that crosses national borders.

Regions figure so prominently in the 2030 Agenda because collaboration across the national borders and sectors is essential to the accomplishment of the SDGs, for at least four reasons:

1. *Inter-governmental bodies are well-positioned to promote multi-sector collaboration that will help drive the success of national SDG efforts*. They transcend boundaries and promote an ethic of shared responsibility and commitment.

2. *Inter-governmental bodies can support, through dialogue and the exchange of best practices, the development of monitoring processes to track the effectiveness of implementation efforts at all levels*. They provide a common platform for discussing the translation of goals into practice and exchanging information on the accountability processes that countries use to monitor and assess their progress.

3. *Inter-governmental bodies can promote knowledge sharing to help countries develop best practices for implementing the SDGs*. They help countries adapt the SDGs to their own contexts and provide the space for creative dialogue that can help stimulate innovation.

4. *Inter-governmental bodies can provide a constructive environment for peer-to-peer review of national efforts to implement the SDGs*. Countries have decades of experience with regional international dialogue and thus are more likely to listen to the constructive ideas of their neighbours about how to improve planning, implementation and reporting.

Against this background, inter-governmental bodies in the Baltic Sea Region appear extremely well positioned to play an important role in supporting member countries, as well as all regional stakeholders, in the implementation of strategies and plans to realize the vision of the SDGs.

Enhancing collaboration can lead to a transformed region where sustainable development is the engine of economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social well-being; and the Baltic Sea Region is already building on a long history of successful work in this regard.

Sustainable development has been as a cross-cutting theme in the Baltic Sea region for more than 20 years. The Baltic 21 process was initiated over 20 years ago as a multi-stakeholder network, including both the national governments and the European Commission, the macro-regional, sub-regional and intergovernmental organizations, financial and academic institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders. The Baltic Sea Region was the first macro-region in the world to adopt common goals for sustainable development.

Over the years, no other macro-region has had such a strong track-record on sustainable development in both principle and practice. The Baltic 2030 Action Plan builds on this legacy of cooperation, and extends it into the future, in alignment with the global 2030 Agenda.

B. The Way Forward

There is much that is already happening in the Baltic Sea Region in support of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, but some gaps and needs remain. Transparent and participatory qualitative progress is only possible if backed by regional agreements and

partnerships, also in support of strengthened regional governance structures and an international Baltic Sea protection process that already includes regular assessments, monitoring, reporting, and reviews.

We recognize a need to:

- *Increase general awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs* in the Baltic Sea Region, and of sustainable development as an integrated concept.

- *Increase the overall level of engagement and activity* in the Baltic Sea Region that is focused on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- *Increase partnerships and transdisciplinary collaborations* for finding creative solutions for regional SDGs implementation.

- *Enhance cooperation, coordination and coherent approaches* among the Baltic Sea partners for efficient and effective synergies to bundle forces and avoid any duplication of work.

- *Broaden engagement* and stimulate greater activity in the private sector, civil society, education and academia.

- *Promote concepts of policy integration and coherence* to address the increasing complexity and inter-connectedness of sustainable development issues.

- *Redouble our efforts on existing cross-cutting issues* that are linked to multiple SDGs, including climate change, environmental quality in our sea, and promoting a sustainable approach to economic development through climate-neutral and resource-wise actions.

- *Focus attention on critical issues related to the six focus areas.*

To address these needs, the Baltic 2030 Action Plan has three key elements:

1. A new *common vision* that can inspire our work and be promoted to all stakeholders, institutions, sectors, and citizens, throughout the Baltic Sea Region.

2. A set of six *priority focus areas*, linked to that vision statement, to help guide our collaborative work on the Baltic 2030 process into the areas of greatest need and impact.

3. A set of six recommended *activation processes* that can empower all actors in the Baltic Sea Region to increase their engagement on collaborative work to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and our common vision.

B.1 Our Common Vision of the Year 2030

The Baltic Sea Region is among the first truly sustainable regions on Earth.

- *The Baltic Sea Region is transformed and empowered because we have worked together in partnership.*

- *Following a transformation driven by innovation and entrepreneurship, the economies of the Baltic Sea Region follow a sustainable model that conserves resources, protects ecosystems, and provides meaningful employment for all.*

- *The Baltic Sea Region has responded to the challenges of climate change in alignment with the Paris Agreement and has increased resilience to climate change.*

- *Our cities, towns and communities are vital places that provide opportunities and a high quality of life for people of every age and background.*

- *All have access to excellent educational opportunities, at every phase of life.*

- *Gender equality is respected, all types of inequalities are being addressed, and the rights of all, with special attention to the rights of children, are protected.*

This vision statement is to be widely promoted and shared throughout the Baltic Sea Region, so that all actors can have the opportunity to adopt it and play their role in realizing its achievement.

B.2 Priority Focus Areas

This framework of six priority focus areas, developed after an extensive review of common concerns and reflecting the input of many regional stakeholders, represents a practical way to address the complexity of the 2030 Agenda in the Baltic Sea region.

It is vitally important that these focus areas are not treated as six separate areas of work. They are deeply interconnected. Actions taken in one focus area should strive to bear that inter-connectivity in mind, and continuously seek ways to integrate relevant aspects of other focus areas. This corresponds to the holistic approach of the 2030 Agenda.

These six areas of priority focus and their linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals are described below and illustrated in Figure 1.

1. Partnerships for Sustainable Development (SDG 17)

Creating macro-regional, multi-stakeholder, inclusive partnerships, taking into account respective roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders, are a core strategy for increasing regional cooperation and achieving sustainable development — a clear affirmation of the need for a Baltic 2030 process, which can encourage and catalyze the formation and strengthening of such partnerships. Existing partnerships should be strengthened, and new partnerships in the Baltic Sea Region should be encouraged, focused on **knowledge sharing, technical exchange, capacity building, developing more coherent policies, and finding innovative concrete practical solutions**. Partnerships function as an overarching theme that drives progress in all the other focus areas, as illustrated in Figure 1.

2. Transition to a Sustainable Economy (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 14)

This area creates a cluster of seven SDGs and focuses on how each contributes to the transition to a sustainable economy in the Baltic Sea Region. In most cases, working on one or two of the SDGs in this cluster has positive effects on all the others.

Given that our macro-region has one of the world's largest ecological footprints, we have much to do if we are to achieve this economic transition, across many of these SDGs, which urge us **to increase efficiency, reduce waste, manage resources wisely, adopt more sustainable production practices and lifestyles**, and learn to live in greater harmony with nature.

This focus area includes several inter-connected challenges:

- Creating a sustainable agricultural system (SDG 2)
- Addressing water issues, such as using water efficiently, reducing water pollution, and protecting water-related ecosystems (SDG 6)
- Providing affordable and clean energy for all and continuing the energy transformation from fossil to renewable sources (SDG 7)
- Ensuring productive employment and decent work for all, including a commitment to increasing entrepreneurship and enhancing youth employment (SDG 8)
- Fostering research and innovation and sustainable industrial processes (SDG 9), with a special focus on Target 9.4: "upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes." The need to adapt creatively to a "silver economy" (an economy with an aging demographic) also falls under the general terms of SDG 9.
- Ensuring responsible consumption and production patterns (SDG 12), and promoting a "green" and "circular bio-based economy" on land and a sustainable "blue economy" in the Baltic Sea, noticing the Declaration of the European Ministers responsible for the Integrated Maritime Policy on Blue Growth, 20 April 2017, Valetta, Malta.
- Ensuring sustainable use of the Baltic Sea and its marine resources (SDG 14), recognizing ocean-related targets of other SDGs and focusing on strengthened implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan by 2021 and renewed actions until 2030.[2]

3. Climate Action (SDG 13 and aspects of SDGs 2, 3, 15 and 16)

Climate-related issues remain a central concern in the Baltic Sea Region, and will continue to be a special area of priority. This focus area links strongly to the previous one, "Transition to a Sustainable Economy," because essentially all actions under that focus area will help to address climate change issues as well. Achieving a low-emission and resource-wise Baltic Sea Region is the recommended objective as a part of climate change mitigation.

However, work on the issue of climate change should reflect the integration of mitigation and adaptation issues, which requires enhanced regional cooperation, especially in the area of

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[2] *As decided by the Baltic Sea countries and the EU at the Helcom High-Level Segment on 28th of February 2017 in Helsinki, Finland*

increasing **climate change adaptation and resilience**. This focus area encompasses several related dimensions, including **emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction management** related to climate and weather risks BSR (SDG 16), **monitoring emerging new health risks** (SDG 3), **food security risks** (SDG 2), **responding to stresses in regional ecosystems** (SDG 15), and other challenges. A key objective of work in this focus area is to mainstream climate change adaptation as part of all planning and sectoral development processes in order to strengthen the resilience of infrastructure and of societies generally and to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in the BSR.

4. Equality and Social Wellbeing for All (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 10 and 16)

The Baltic Sea Region includes countries that are rated among the world's most equal — but also some of the world's most rapidly changing societies, moving in the direction of rising inequality.

Gender equality (SDG 5) is given special priority in this cluster, because achieving this Goal remains, according to many indicators, an issue of significant challenge for all countries in The Baltic Sea Region. Gender equality has also been identified internationally as one of the key Goals necessary for the achievement of the other Goals.

The **rights of children**, which are covered in several of the SDGs, are also given special priority here. Children should not be living in situations of abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence, anywhere in the BSR.

This cluster also supports a focus on the Baltic Sea Region's shared **demographic challenges**, including an **aging population**, **population shifts** within the BSR, **migration** patterns into and out of the BSR, as well as **inequities in the economic and social circumstances** of BSR citizens. There are also significant differences among people in the BSR when it comes to life span and healthy life years, and there remain many **health-related challenges** for us to work on together. Aspects of SDG 2 are also included in this cluster, because many in the BSR suffer from nutrition-related ailments (such as obesity).

SDG 1 is included in this cluster because while the Baltic Sea Region includes some of the world's most prosperous countries, we have not completely eradicated poverty. There are people in poverty living in our countries, in forms ranging from lack of inclusion in social protection programs to destitute homelessness, as well as poverty arising from the interactions between rural and urban areas. "**Ending poverty in all its forms**" remains a challenge to be addressed in every country in the Baltic Sea Region.

SDG 16 is included in this cluster because of the continuing need in the BSR **to address crime and violence and acts of discrimination which people face in the Baltic Sea Region**.

5. Creating Sustainable and Resilient Cities and Communities (SDG 11)

By 2050, the world's urban population is expected to nearly double, making urbanization one of the twenty-first century's most transformative trends. This is true for the world, but also for the Baltic Sea Region. Populations, economic activities, social and cultural interactions, as well as environmental and humanitarian impacts, are increasingly concentrated in cities, and this poses massive sustainability challenges in terms of housing, infrastructure, basic services, food security, health, education, decent jobs, safety and natural resources, among others.

At the same time, **supporting positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas** — by strengthening national, macro-regional, and sub-regional development planning — is crucial. Work in the Baltic Sea Region on these issues needs to acknowledge a territorial perspective anchored in mutually-reinforcing **urban-rural synergies,** and not focus narrowly on cities. This systemic view is crucial for implementing the SDGs in the Baltic Sea Region and successfully addressing issues such as **sustainable and low emission transport and energy supply, spatial planning**, **resilience to climate change** and **ensuring a supply of resources to industry and urban areas**.

Other challenges and opportunities posed by the urbanizing world of the 21st Century are livelihood creation, poverty, inequality, informality, the provision of basic services, connectivity, air pollution, safety and inclusion. When it comes to achieving many of the SDGs, towns and cities — including their connections to rural areas and their linkages across national boundaries — are a real test of our capacity to create effective strategies, **integrated planning processes, and inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships.**

For all these reasons, creating sustainable towns and cities (not just dynamic capital cities) is important to the wellbeing of the whole Baltic Sea Region. But there is great unevenness in the health and vitality of our cities as well as in their practice of sustainability, their level of resilience, and the overall quality of their infrastructure. Some cities in the Baltic region are considered among the most sustainable in the world, but even these are not yet truly sustainable.

The Baltic 2030 process needs to support and supplement existing efforts **to empower all our communities to achieve sustainable development** at the local level — and all the SDGs, as adapted to that level. **Exchange among subnational and local governments, parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, professionals and practitioners, the scientific and academic community, and other relevant stakeholders** is vital in this regard, as is the **promotion of social innovation processes** at all levels. Vertical integration should be promoted wherever possible.

In addition, the **climate resilience of urban areas** could be strengthened by b**etter forecast and warning systems** to prepare for extreme weather and water events and up-to-date vulnerability and risks assessments for addressing the best measures to cope with the predicted and observed climate change impacts. For example, more "green infrastructure" is needed to improve the control of flash floods and urban runoff.[3]

6. Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All (SDG 4)

Promoting **quality education — with a special focus on education for sustainable development**.

In the BSR, successfully addressing many of the challenges we face is particularly dependent on having a solid educational foundation, as well as the ability to acquire new learning methods

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[3] *"Green infrastructure can be broadly defined as a strategically planned network of high quality natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features, which is designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services and protect biodiversity in both rural and urban settings." Source: DG-Environment, European Commission.*

and new skills over the course of one's life. Transforming our economy, addressing climate change, tackling rapidly changing social and health issues, and supporting implementation of sustainable development in the local level are all complex processes requiring research, new knowledge, innovation, and learning exchange.

At the same time the BSR is experiencing accelerated technology advance in areas such as robotics, digitalization, social media, and artificial intelligence. These rapid changes are underscoring the need to **develop an approach to education and lifelong learning throughout the Baltic Sea Region** that can support all countries and citizens to adapt constructively to these emerging realities.

This focus area includes this full array of issues related to education and lifelong learning, including a **special emphasis on scientific literacy and research, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education and innovation,** which can support sustainable development from an economic, social, and cultural perspective.
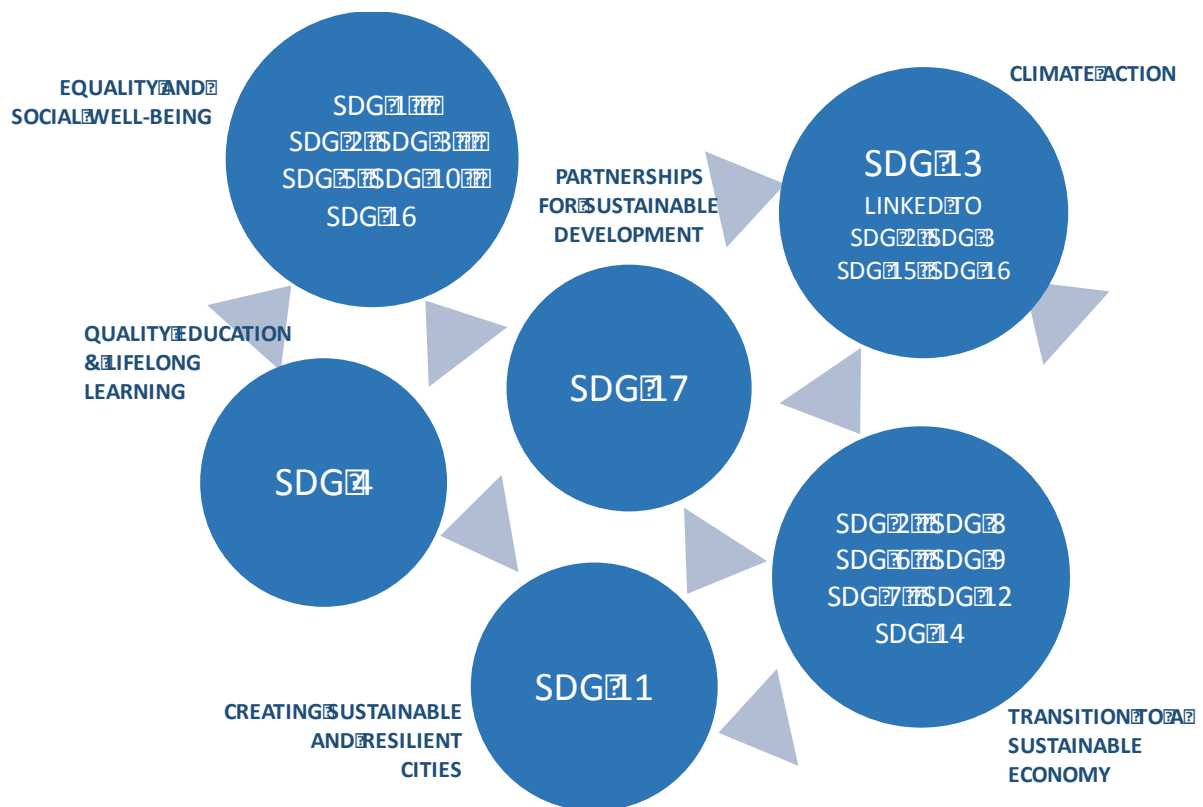

Figure 1: The Six Priority Focus Areas

B.3 Activation Processes

The six priority focus areas above define the content of the work to be pursued. To advance progress in those areas, a set of six **activation processes** — voluntary and non-binding tools — will be promoted as part of this Baltic 2030 Action Plan.

The intent of these activation processes is also to support the national implementation of the SDGs by catalyzing increased engagement on sustainable development across, sectors, geographic levels, and stakeholder groups, acknowledging the need to engage with youth. The specific recommended actions within each activation process, including *inter alia* the roles of ministries and sectoral platforms, will be described in future implementation discussions.

The activation processes are:

1. Establishing the 2030 Agenda as a Regional Framework for transformative change towards Sustainable Development

This activation process involves focusing greater regional attention on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs themselves, promoting adoption of the common vision, and related communications and facilitation work. The aim of this process is to broaden general awareness of, and deepen commitment to, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, so that they become the common reference point for all collaborative development activity in the Baltic Sea Region.

2. Stimulating Private-Science Networking and Engagement in Key Sectors

Private sector and research sector actors, among others, are expected to drive many of the changes that are required to achieve the 2030 Agenda, both as participants in multi-stakeholder partnerships, and within their own operations. Activating the private sector involves catalyzing discussion and action in regional platforms and dialogues with the aim of accelerating work on the "green economy," "circular and bio-based economy," "blue economy," "silver economy" and similar development processes that can advance the overall transition to a sustainable economy. Activating the research sector involves stimulating greater pan-Baltic exchange on research topics related to the focus areas, as well as facilitating the linkages between research and private sector development at the macro-regional level. Acting as a catalyst to generate activities of these kinds — through hosting seminars and workshops or facilitating online information exchange — represents a critical need and an opportunity for the Baltic 2030 process to add significant value to the Baltic Sea Region.[4]

3. Promoting the Engagement of the Education Sector

Education has been universally identified as an essential element for regional success. The Baltic Sea Region has eminent institutions for pan-Baltic networking on education and sustainable development, but there is a need for increased networking activity related to vocational education, professional training, and other dimensions of lifelong learning. Activation processes organized under the Baltic 2030 Action Plan should work to lift the visibility of existing initiatives and link them more effectively to other processes, such as private sector initiatives linked to activation process 2 above. The Baltic Sea Region also needs

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[4] *As an important background document for stimulating additional private sector engagement, see the report of the global Business Commission on Sustainable Development, "Better Business, Better World" (January 2017), which has identified over USD 12 trillion in business opportunity that would result from pursuing the implementation of the SDGs in the private sector.*

to stimulate the creation of new partnerships and processes to amplify and accelerate the development of quality education for sustainable development.

4. Empowering Civil Society to Amplify Innovation and Action

Civil society organizations in the Baltic Sea Region are relatively active on the SDGs, but there is a need for greater collaborative activity focused on civil society itself — in all its forms, from formal non-governmental organizations to small community groups — as a key actor for realizing regional sustainable development aims. Existing processes that aim to network civil society in the BSR could be encouraged and strengthened in their efforts to mobilize themselves, so that they can be more effective contributors to the Baltic Sea Region by promoting societal engagement, stimulating innovation, contributing to research efforts, and helping to bring social transformation efforts to scale.

5. Addressing Demographic Shifts with Creative Initiatives

Demographic changes such as the BSR's aging population, the dwindling of its population in some countries' rural regions and smaller cities, and the recent influx of migrants from central Asia, Africa and the Middle East are issues that dominate policy discussion in the BSR. The Baltic 2030 process could explore opportunities to address these issues constructively and creatively, with an aim towards linking activity on these issues to SDG outcomes, with a more integrated, innovative, and transformative approach.

6. Facilitating and Monitoring Regional Partnership for Sustainable Development

A core need identified by essentially all stakeholders and observers of sustainable development processes in the Baltic Sea Region is enhanced cooperation, and partnership. The Baltic 2030 process should facilitate — through communications, digital tools and platforms, as well as live events — the formation and strengthening of partnership activities among stakeholder groups.[5]

C. Implementation and Monitoring

The Baltic 2030 Action Plan is a general call for all countries and all actors in the BSR to work together and a recommendation to take initiative to help realize a common vision of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region, grounded in the global agreement on the 2030 Agenda. This Action Plan offers a framework to support macro-regional, national, and sub-regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda 2030.

Implementation of the Action Plan relies on the contributions and actions of countries, cities-sub-regions, business and BSR stakeholders and networks. The implementation process will not attempt to monitor national level implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which remains a national responsibility; neither does it require additional reporting from the countries.

Monitoring and follow-up of the Baltic 2030 Action Plan would seek to document, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, how widely the Action Plan has been adopted and used and

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[5] *There are models for this type of activation process at the global level, such as the partnership platform of UNDESA, and at the national level; but there is no regional platform currently fulfilling this function in the BSR.*

what new regional partnerships and initiatives it has stimulated. It would also review the content and structure of the Baltic 2030 Action Plan itself, to see whether it should be amended to respond to emerging issues and conditions; and it would communicate the need for such amendments to the CBSS member states for subsequent approval. This could also be done in alignment with the thematic focus areas of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) at the United Nations and Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, drawing on the Voluntary National Reports of CBSS member states.

In addition, the CBSS EGSD will take responsibility for the following, provided resources are available:

- **Elaborating and setting in motion an Implementation Process** as a supplement to this Action Plan that will encourage all stakeholders to engage and take responsibility for realizing the vision of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. (See Annex 1.) As part of an Implementation Process, the EGSD will create a process for identifying partnerships and initiatives and formally recognizing them as contributing to Baltic 2030 and to present the results to the CSO and society at large on a regular basis.

- **Convening meetings, forums, seminars and other events**, both live and digitally mediated, that address the priority focus areas in line with the Chair's and the EGSD's priorities[6] and that stimulate the engagement of stakeholders in the six activation processes.

- **Communicating the Baltic 2030 Action Plan** as widely as possible, and developing communications tools — such as a web-based collaborative learning platform— that can support the activation processes, and stimulate stakeholder activity to realize the Baltic 2030 common vision by sharing knowledge and best practices, recognizing initiatives and achievements, and diffusing success stories.

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[6] *The Mandate of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development stipulates the following focus areas: sustainability governance on macroregional level; mitigation of and adaptation to climate change; sustainable urban development; sustainable consumption and production; environmental education and outreach.*

Annex 1. Developing an Implementation Process

When developing the Implementation Process for the Baltic 2030 Action Plan, one should bear in mind that the Action Plan is intended to stimulate the engagement of all regional stakeholders, while promoting an integrated understanding of sustainable development.

The following table illustrates the relationship between the 2030 Agenda, the common vision, the six priority focus areas, and the six activation processes. The relationships are further illustrated on the following page in Figure 2.

Note that:

- The activation processes can address more than one priority focus area. Cross-cutting partnerships and initiatives are encouraged.

- Implementation actions are not limited to those undertaken by the EGSD, but are inclusive of actions taken by other actors in the Baltic Sea Region.
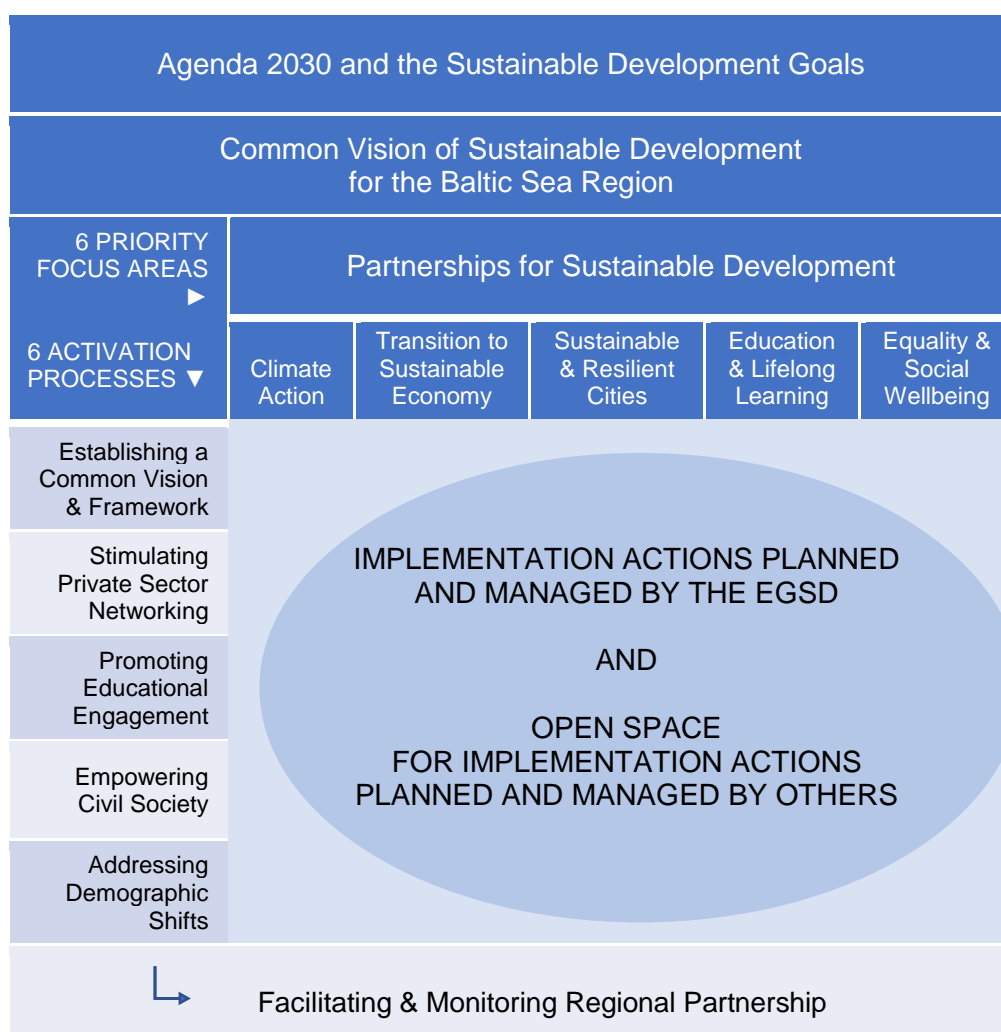
Table 1: *Initial planning matrix and Implementation Framework for the Baltic 2030 Action Plan*
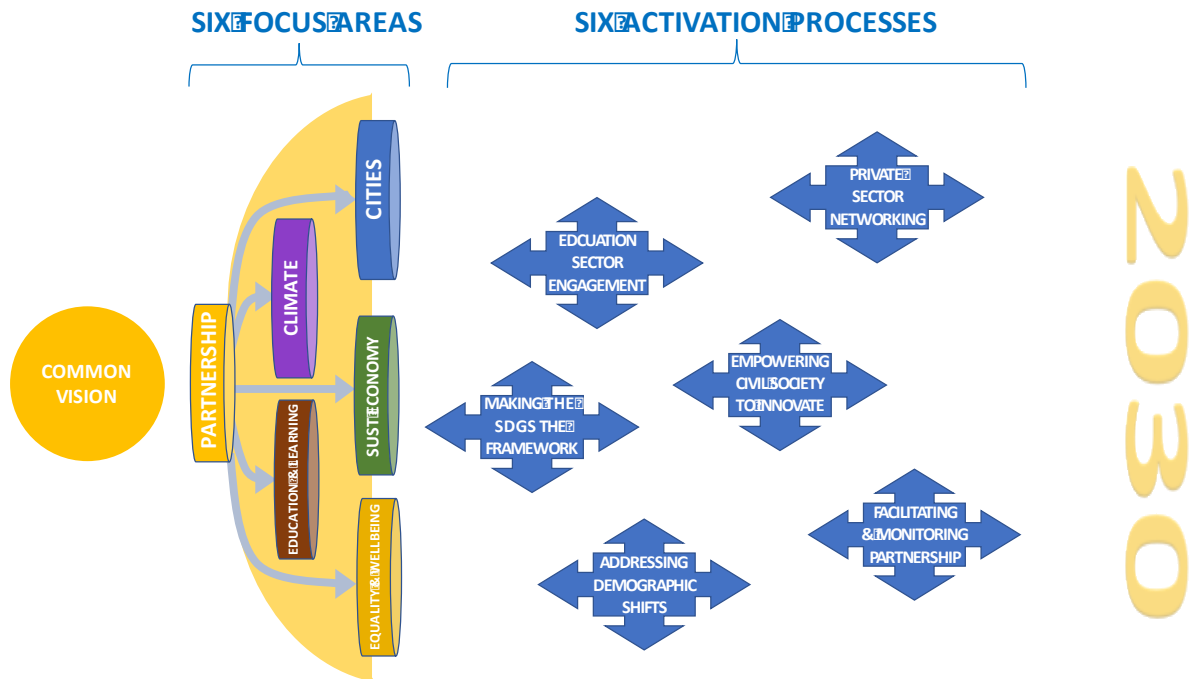
Figure 2: An illustration of the relationship between the common vision, the six focus areas, and the six activation processes. The common vision works primarily through partnership processes to bring attention to the other five focus areas (as well as to the process of forming partnerships itself). These focus area topics are taken up in the activation processes, which broaden outreach and engagement with stakeholders.