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## 2 LOCAL MANAGEMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

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**We are committed to implementing effective management cycles, from formulation through implementation to evaluation.**

This Commitment is about strengthening local sustainability processes, mainstreaming sustainability into local governments planning and daily work and regular verification and comparison of the results based on different types of indicators using commonly recognized monitoring tools and networks. It therefore requires the implementation of effective sustainability management cycles.

We will therefore work to:

### **1. Strengthen Local Agenda 21 or other local sustainability processes and mainstream them into the heart of local government**

The Earth Summit in Rio (1992) called for local authorities all over the world to start translating the global sustainability agenda into local action. Local Agenda 21 requires municipalities to look at the social and economic as well as the environmental aspects in a participatory, dynamic and interactive manner. During the late 1990s LA21 processes were implemented in many local authorities across Europe, however more recently many of these participatory practices are being replaced by statutory obligations of local administrations for formal consultations and involvement in response to the Aarhus Convention ([www.participate.org/convention/convention.htm](http://www.participate.org/convention/convention.htm)) and other legal instruments supporting public access to decision making processes. Many local authorities are taking steps to properly involve citizens and stakeholder organisations in their sustainability processes, for example in establishing a Fossil Fuel Reduction Program (The Local Agenda 21 process in a small idyllic university town Vahjo, South of Sweden with business and entertainment tourism opportunities, was incorporated in development of a Fossil Fuel Reduction Program [www.vahjo.se](http://www.vahjo.se) Other examples include the development of citizen forums and awareness activities on LA21 and environment strategies (for example [www.cesis.lv](http://www.cesis.lv)).

In order to help or to enhance local authorities in promoting sustainable development and local sustainability implementation, the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign networks provide support and guidance. National networks of local governments also provide this role, for example the Network of cities and towns towards sustainability in Spain <http://www.diba.es/xarxasost/cat/index.asp>

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### **2. Deliver integrated management systems towards sustainability based on the precautionary principle and with regard to the EU Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment**

Urban areas play an important role in delivering the objectives of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. However, Europe's urban areas face number of challenges including poor air quality, traffic congestions, urban sprawl, greenhouse gas emissions, increasing waste streams and water problems. Local authorities have a decisive role to play in implementing environmental legislation and improving the environmental performance of their municipalities. The best performing local governments have developed integrated approaches to urban management where daily decisions are guided by strategic vision and objectives. Adopting an integrated approach to the management of the urban environment helps to achieve a long-term vision of the development of a municipality. Clearly defined objectives, targets, responsibilities, procedures for monitoring progress, public consultations, reviews and audits are essential for the effective implementation of measures. Environmental management systems (EMAS, ISO14001), environmental budgeting (ref out to EcoBudget website), methods of environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment are examples of such an integrated approach. Many local governments are adopting these approaches for example Varese Figure is the first municipality in Italy to obtain ISO 14001 and the first in the European Union to obtain EMAS

(<http://www.comune.vareseligure.sp.it/doc/DichiarazioneAmbientale.pdf>)

For Latvian municipalities promoting EMAS see <http://www.lvpa.lv/>. Extensive assistance for selection of methods can be identified through toolkits, developed by organizations such as Union of Baltic Cities ( [www.ubc.net](http://www.ubc.net)) and ICLEI ( [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org))

In January 2006 the European Commission launched its Urban Thematic Strategy to help Member States, implement EU environmental policies and legislation at local level through exchange of experience and learning from each another about measures that are particularly effective in improving the environmental performance of Europe's towns and cities. Details can be found at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/>

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### **3. Set targets and time schemes in the framework of the Aalborg Commitments and create and follow the Aalborg commitments monitoring review**

The 4<sup>th</sup> European Sustainable Cities and Towns Conference (Aalborg+10) in 2004 adopted Aalborg +10 Commitments. By signing up to these Commitments, local governments voluntarily agree to undertake a baseline environmental review of their municipality within 12 months. Within 24 months, they should have identified targets for actions, in consultation with stakeholder organisations. By the end of 2006 355 local governments had signed the Commitments and 36 had signed a Declaration of Intention. For further information on the Aalborg Commitments and an up to date list of Signatories go to <http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/>

### **4. Ensure that sustainability issues are central to urban decision-making processes and that resources allocation is based on strong and broad sustainability criteria**

Many local governments define sustainability as a general strategic goal, however it is hard to find clear evidence of where this commitment has been put into practice, especially when it relates to decision-making on allocation of financial resources to sectoral programmes or single projects. However there are interesting examples of good practice in this area. The City of Goteborg, Sweden uses its budget as overriding document for governance and the priority objectives in its budget are revised annually (find website). Province of Siena, Italy has developed an Energy Plan and Incentive project for Solar Thermal Energy (see Siena Baseline Review report available at <http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/>)

### **5. Cooperate with the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign and its networks to monitor and evaluate our progress towards meeting our sustainability targets**

The European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign ([www.sustainable-cities.eu](http://www.sustainable-cities.eu)) was launched at the 1<sup>st</sup> European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in Aalborg, Denmark in 1994. A number of networks of cities and towns are members of the Campaign and support local authorities in their work on local sustainable development, through promoting tools, relevant initiatives, and examples of good practice. For example the European Common Indicators Initiative ([http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/common\\_indicators.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/common_indicators.htm)) is focused on monitoring environmental sustainability at local level. A set of 10 indicators and data collection methodologies were developed across a range of towns and cities across Europe. European Solar Cities (<http://sc.ises.org>) aims at promoting wider use of renewable energy within the context of long term planning for sustainable urban development. ICLEI (<http://www.iclei.org>) is an international association of local, national and regional governments that have made commitment to sustainable development and are developing tools for local sustainability management and implementation.

**To find further Resources relating to Aalborg Commitment 2, click here:**

[http://www.localresources21.org/theme\\_matrix.php?t=2&PHPSESSID=27b0c0a1042648b3a33baf8c218ce455](http://www.localresources21.org/theme_matrix.php?t=2&PHPSESSID=27b0c0a1042648b3a33baf8c218ce455)