Action Plan of the Energy & Climate Working Group of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission 2021-2023

Introduction

This two-year Work Plan includes the priorities and objectives of the Member Regions of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Energy and Climate Working Group (ECWG) for 2021-2023. It serves as a roadmap while allowing sufficient flexibility to carry it out. The Work Plan is based on regions’ needs, and is anchored in the European, national, macro-regional (EUSBSR) and regional policy framework. It also includes the CPMR Agenda relating to energy and climate policies.

One of the main challenges in 2021 for the BSC regions is to document the general framework within which the ECWG is operating. This framework includes the EU’s main on-going activities, the CPMR targets, and the key interests of the BSC regions within the field of energy and climate. There is already a massive amount of actors, activities, and information on the energy and climate field in the EU and the Baltic Sea Region. So far, the framework within which the CPMR BSC operates and should focus its activities varies in the minds of the people participating in the ECWG work. The primary purpose of documenting this framework is to clarify the potential activities for the ECWG and describe to the Member Regions and potential new Members the benefits and added value the ECWG can bring to them.

1. The Green Deal, the overall framework of the Energy and Climate Working Group of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

The work of the Energy and Climate Working Group (ECWG) is anchored in the European Green Deal Agenda, as the new EU growth strategy post-2020. Through their activities within the Working Group, Member Regions are committed to contributing to achieve the goals of climate neutrality as set out in the Green Deal. Member Regions intend to strengthen cooperation to explore and facilitate the modalities of energy transition with a view to a carbon neutral economy and to help Europe achieve climate neutrality. However, Regions from the Energy and Climate Working Group have been dealing with the effects of climate change for years, as both mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change requires policies and actions at regional level. CPMR BSC Regions have been frontrunners in developing and implementing sustainable solutions. Regions are well on track to achieve climate neutrality, and several Member Regions of the ECWG have anchored this goal at the heart of their Regional Development Strategy.

In a recovery context, green transition is an opportunity to redirect our societies towards a more sustainable, hence more competitive and resilient model, and to support job creation. The Recovery Plans include a specific allocation to climate and this will be followed closely by the Working Group. The use of digital solutions also creates new opportunities to foster green transition and recovery.
promotion of further private and public cooperation to foster the goal of climate neutrality will also be addressed in the Working Group.

By deepening regional cooperation, the Working Group will work to improve the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region which is resilient and sustainable. It will work to foster and spread the development of new sustainable practices, and ensure European policies have a territorial dimension and answer Regions’ needs. The Working Group bases its work on previous BSC positions, such as “A green recovery and Just Transition, leaving no regions behind!” and also on CPMR work, such as “CPMR Regions at the heart of the European Green Deal” and the “Regions Act! Initiative”.

2. Policy focuses and goals of the ECWG for 2021-2023

The ECWG needs to identify the focus areas and activity goals on which this collaboration can bring added value to the Member Regions. In defining the goals, we need to keep in mind the resources that are available and can be allocated to the ECWG work. In each of the focus areas, concrete measures and objectives will be defined. So far, the definitions of measures mainly include only the promotional focus areas. Tentatively, the following focuses and goals have been identified which should bring also new business and innovative opportunities for the Baltic Sea Region:

Agriculture has been identified as a topic included in all 4 different themes. There should be more synergies between agriculture and sectors of clean energies, forestry and circular economy.

1/ Promoting Clean Energies
- Foster the production, consumption and development of efficient clean energies and new generation of fuels (electrification of industries, and transport sectors, sectoral integration, biogas energy, biomass, renewable energies, biofuels, synthetic fuels) and their use in different sectors, such as industry and transport;
- Promote the systemic approach to main energy production and distribution grids (heating and electricity) and the role of local production of energy, energy infrastructures and storage in these grids such as wind and solar.

2/ Promote forestry and its multi-functional roles
- Promote a regional dimension of the future EU Forest Strategy post-2020 and the new Bauhaus Initiative;
- Promote forests as a carbon sink
- Strengthen the role and importance of bioeconomy for achieving increased sustainability and adaption to climate change.

3/ Facilitate the transition towards an innovative circular economy
- Promote the principles and practices of the new EU policy in circular economy, focusing also on bio-based circular economy;
- Foster the use of materials and resources in a more sustainable way;
- Promote heat recovery and local and smart solutions;
- Promote the sustainable use of forest resources.
- Promote the development and use of circular business models
- Promote circular procurements as a mean to stimulate more innovative business

4/ Support the development of S4 – Sustainable Smart Specialisation Strategies
- Promote the participation in and the use of the EU Smart Specialisation Energy Platform;
• Identify the BSC regions which have Energy and Climate priorities in their RIS3 strategies;
• Promote recent developments and benefits of the EU S4 policy to motivate the BSC regions to participate in the work of the ECWG;

In addition to these four policy priorities, the Energy and Climate Working Group will follow the development of the EU adaptation Strategy to climate change and contribute to it, including via CPMR Climate Task Force.

C. Mission and working methods of the ECWG

Missions:
• **Monitor** relevant policy developments at EU and national levels relating to energy and climate and ensure a regional perspective (Green Deal Agenda and the relevant policies, initiatives and programmes...);
• **Formulate and share with representatives of EU institutions**, Policy Positions, reports and contributions to public consultations on relevant EU policies and instruments relating to energy and climate;
• **Promote** the interests of the BSC Member Regions on energy and climate policy areas and participate in relevant events;
• **Foster the exchange** of best practices, knowledge, experience and targeted information between Members of the Working Group on climate change mitigation and adaptation;
• **Serve** as a shared platform for project development and follow relevant European Calls and programmes with potential funding opportunities for BSC Regions such as the Interreg Baltic Sea programme,

Working methods:
• Cooperation between BSC Working Groups (sustainable mobility with the Transport Working Group and adaptation with the Maritime Working Group);
• Contribution to CPMR work relating to energy and climate, including the CPMR Climate Task Force;
• Study visits, physical meetings, online meetings;
• Regular dialogue with EU institutions, but also partners, organizations and stakeholders.
• Annual review linked to the working program of the European Commission

D. Planned Actions for 2021-2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key topics and objectives</th>
<th>EU legislation, initiatives, programmes</th>
<th>Meetings and events</th>
<th>Mapping, reports, Policy Positions</th>
<th>External cooperation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1/Promoting Clean Energies</strong></td>
<td>- Review of the Renewable Energy Directive to implement the ambition of the new 2030 climate targets</td>
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<td>CPMR Transport Working Group The relevant Policy Areas of the EU Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>- Revision of the Directive on deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure</td>
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<td>- Resilience and Recovery Plan</td>
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<td>- Sustainable ports, together with the BSC Transport Working Group</td>
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<td><strong>2/ Promote Forestry as a carbon sink</strong></td>
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<td>- EU Forest Strategy post-2020</td>
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<td>- Bauhaus Strategy</td>
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<td>- Energy performance of buildings</td>
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<td>- Support the implementation of the European Strategy for a sustainable bioeconomy</td>
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<td>- January 2021: first discussion and sharing of best practices regarding Forests</td>
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<td>- March 2021: follow-up on the discussion on EU Forest Strategy and the place of wood in the Bauhaus Strategy</td>
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<td><strong>3/ Innovative circular economy</strong></td>
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<td>- Sustainable product policy, including eco-design Directive</td>
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<td>- Procurement</td>
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<td><strong>4/ Foster the shift towards S4 (sustainable smart specialisation strategies)</strong></td>
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<td>- Follow the EU smart specialisation agenda</td>
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**for the Baltic Sea Region**

- Other pan-Baltic organisations

**EU institutions’ representatives working on energy and climate topics**

- Other BSC Working Groups

**Other BSC organisations**

- EU institutions’ representatives working on energy and climate topics

**Other BSC Working Groups**

- Follow the climate dimension of the recovery plans

**January 2021: first discussion and sharing of best practices regarding Forests**

**March 2021: follow-up on the discussion on EU Forest Strategy and the place of wood in the Bauhaus Strategy**

**Background Paper on EU Forest Strategy**

**Contribution to the EU public consultation on the EU Forest Strategy**