



**BALTIC REGION HEALTHY CITIES ASSOCIATION**

**WHO Collaborating Centre for  
Healthy Cities and Urban Health  
in the Baltic Region**



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## **PLAN OF OPERATIONS 2003**

**Approved by The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Board  
in December 2002**

## **BACKGROUND**

Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association has been approved as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the Baltic Region in September 2002 for a four years' period. The location of the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office is Turku, Finland.

The Collaborating Centre's work is targeted to all the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, especially to **A)** the Cities in the Healthy Cities network, **B)** the Cities in the National Healthy Cities Networks and **C)** the Cities/municipalities interested to join these networks

The sub-regional Healthy Cities offices is to expand and reinforce the capacity of WHO Centre for Urban Health to support project cities and national networks. The offices will act as an extended operational arm of the WHO Healthy Cities programme by establishing close and frequent contacts with cities and networks, by building a knowledge base of local needs, and by drawing on the technical resources of the cities and countries of the Baltic Region.

The **TERMS OF REFERENCE** of the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office is to:

- collaborate and support CITIES towards Healthy Cities
- facilitate co-operation between national Healthy Cities NETWORKS e.g. through meetings and events
- collect information about the urban health conditions
- organise training and capacity building in the important aspects of Healthy Cities development
- foster different kinds of projects aimed to improve the health

**THE MAIN ACTIVITY AREAS** follow the Health 21 and Healthy Cities priorities in Europe:

- partnership building especially in integrated health development planning
- city health profiling
- governance and community participation
- sustainable development and health as well as urban planning

## **ADMINISTRATION**

The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association (Itämeren alueen Terveet Kaupungit ry) runs and maintains the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office, or the Baltic Office. Convening biannually, the General Meeting of the Association is the highest decision-making organ of the Association. The Board of the Association, convening at least once a year together with sponsors and the representatives of WHO (World Health Organization), evaluates and directs the activities.

The Board of the Association guides and administers the operations of the Baltic Office, and the office staff is in charge of implementing the activities in practice. Everyday work of the office is conducted by The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Board, which consists of University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University, Social Insurance Institute, Turku School of Economics and Business Administration, and the City of Turku. The basic work is funded by City of Turku and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland. We work in close collaboration with City of Turku/Healthy Cities Project.

The basic operational funding (mainly from the City of Turku) covers staff salaries and the maintenance of the office during its designation as a WHO collaborating centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the Baltic Region. Project funding will be sought from both the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and other sponsors for the regional co-operation, development activities and the implementation and coordination of co-operative projects, as called for by WHO.

## **PROJECTS 2003 (-2006)**

During 2003, the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association will carry out the projects listed below. Funding for these projects will be sought from the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The basic aim of these activities is to fulfil the activity requirements set forth by WHO and to carry out all projects and educational programmes prepared during the previous year.

For the content of the projects, there has been an effort to establish and include the main focuses and viewpoints seen as essentially important by the Ministry, WHO and the member organisations of the Baltic Association. As it is not possible every time to combine all of these purposes, separate projects will inevitably benefit specific organisations in different ways.

***First and foremost***, the projects are intended to support the cities in developing and incorporating the Healthy Cities principles in their own activities. The projects promote the Healthy Cities themes and ideologies in accordance with the terms of reference established by WHO, such as the implementation of the health and well-being strategy and City Health Development Plans. ***In the second place***, the Baltic Health Profile project represents the foundation for the activities of the Association. It handles all of the obligations set for the centre by WHO, and in implementing the project, the Baltic Office will fulfil its core function as a link and a channel for network co-operation. ***In the third place***, the purpose of the Baltic Association is to promote, in a versatile fashion, the improved visibility and communication of the Healthy Cities programme. This also signifies a necessity, as one of the WHO collaborating centres, to produce supporting materials and translations, and to organise meetings and conferences and to ensure that they are attended.

### **1. Baltic Health Profile**

#### BACKGROUND

WHO requires that the Association draft and maintain a regional health profile. This work began already some years ago through the collection of information about the cities in the region, in accordance with the WHO Healthy Cities indicators.

In accordance with the discussions and requests provided at the Baltic Healthy Cities Coordinators' Meeting held in November 2002, the purpose is to transform the "Health Profile" into an information system, from which city administrators can quickly and easily retrieve information about how health and well-being are being promoted in the other cities in their region. Development work on the information system and its content is long-term and ongoing, covering the entire WHO collaborating centre period. At its best, the information system supports the increase of the cities' competence in health and well-being issues.

#### PURPOSES

The overall purpose of the "Health Profile" project is to create and maintain an information system that includes a) preparing the content of the Health Profile to serve the regional coun-

tries and cities in the Baltic Region and b) developing a technical tool to facilitate access to information and input of data.

In 2003, the purpose of the project is to clarify the status quo, and a) to list all of the activities and projects being implemented in the Baltic region, b) to survey the technical solutions that are being utilised as well as c) to draw up a recommendation regarding the content of the profile and related technology for the use of the Healthy Cities.

## **2. Improving the visibility of Healthy Cities activities in the Baltic Region through systematic communication**

### BACKGROUND

Status as a WHO collaborating centre brings new challenges to the Association, and, therefore, also requires systematic development in communications. During 2003, a communications strategy will be drawn up for the four-year period. The strategy will focus on both internal and external communication, as well as improvements in the visibility and notoriety of the Healthy Cities activities locally, nationally and internationally.

### PURPOSE

The purpose is to create a uniform and attractive image for the Baltic Region Healthy Cities activities that would be recognised both locally and internationally. At the same time, the purpose is to support the participation of the members in the Baltic Healthy Cities network in the activities of other networks; in other words, create a sense of solidarity.

### ACTIVITIES IN 2003

In 2003, basic material necessary to increase the visibility of the Healthy Cities programme including a brochure and a mobile exhibition will be produced, and an e-news service will be established. The office will actively promote participation in meetings, particularly the International Healthy Cities Conference in Belfast. A meeting for the co-ordinators will be organised.

## **3. A tool for the development and evaluation of environmental health programmes for officials in the Estonian cities**

### BACKGROUND

For the next four years, the cities within the Estonian Healthy Cities Network are committed to implementing a Health Profile, including a Local Environment and Health Action Plan (LEHAP). This work requires expertise, training and the right tools. In order to assist the cities in this development process, the Association can provide (1) the workbook entitled 'Developing environmental health' published in 2002 and produced jointly by Turku Polytechnic and the Provincial State Office of Western Finland, and (2) the Pro Healthy Life CD-ROM on environmental health produced by The Centre for Extension Studies at the University of Turku with EU Leonardo programme funding.

Plans for arranging the training were discussed at the meeting of the Estonian Healthy Cities Network in October 2002, and in December, the discussion continued with the head of the Environmental Health department of the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs.

### PURPOSES

The purposes of the project for the Estonian Healthy Cities network are

- To develop information and skills for the evaluation and improvement of the environmental health situation
- To increase clarity and comparability in the information regarding environmental health and to create working co-operative networks for the fields of environmental health in Finland and Estonia.

In accordance with the aims of WHO, the project will also promote the co-operation of those carrying out Healthy Cities and Agenda activities in the member cities.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

During 2003, the Association will organise three 1-2 -day workshops with the aim of bringing together network members and experts in Estonia and providing trainers selected from the different cities with training, as designed and evaluated by the Finnish-Estonian expert steering committee. A two-day training session will be organised in connection with the fourth conference of the Estonian Healthy Cities Network to be held in October 2003.

### **4. Health management training for the administrators in the city of Riga and in the Latvian Healthy Cities network**

#### BACKGROUND

Cities included in the European network are required to draw up a comprehensive City Health Development Plan or health strategy, in which health and well-being is visibly integrated in all of the administrative fields. The City of Riga has recently been approved as a member of the Healthy Cities network, and needs support in completing the aforementioned task. Negotiations with Latvian representatives on arranging training for city administrators were conducted in September and December 2002.

#### PURPOSES

The purpose of the project is to promote the implementation of Healthy Cities activities in Latvia, and to encourage the Latvian cities in the Healthy Cities network to draft a urban health development plan. The purpose is also to start preparing a training programme and accompanying materials that would be applicable also in other Baltic cities and would reinforce health management.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

During 2003, we will organise two 2-day training sessions in Latvia on promoting health and well-being in the City of Riga and the country's national network. Participants will receive the task of planning how to proceed and make the process a priority in their own cities, as part of their administrative decision-making. The target group for this training session includes leading administrators and elected officials, from different areas of administration, that are involved in the development of the Healthy Cities activities.

### **5. Incorporating support of mental health and life management in the St Petersburg project for promoting men's health**

#### BACKGROUND

The City of Turku has coordinated two projects, funded by the TACIS programme, in which the target city is St Petersburg, and the City of Rotterdam serves as a co-operative partner. In Turku, a new project is now being prepared in which, through the training of officials in the St Petersburg Health Care Committee and teachers at the Makarov Maritime Academy, we are

able to produce material for health promotion applicable in St Petersburg. The result of this project will be to establish a "Knowledge Centre" in St Petersburg for health promotion. The Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and WHO are also jointly establishing a Healthy City Centre in St Petersburg, with which the previously mentioned Knowledge Centre can work in close co-operation.

#### PURPOSES

The purpose of the Baltic Association is to provide training related to mental health and life management for the St Petersburg project to promote men's health for both a) officials in Turku that are serving as trainers in the project and b) the trainees based in St Petersburg.

The project facilitates the maintenance and development of working relationships with the St Petersburg Health Care Committee and creates a basis for future discourse regarding new projects.

### **6. Report on the need for development of health-enhancing physical activity strategies within the Baltic Region Healthy Cities network**

#### BACKGROUND

The background for the project consists of a) the project entitled "Developing co-operation between Southern Finland and Estonia in the field of physical activity at the local level", in which the Association is a partner and which is funded by the Interreg IIIA programme and set to be implemented during 2002-2003, and b) the European network's Active Living co-operative project, which Turku is co-ordinating.

#### PURPOSES

During 2003, the purpose of the project will be to investigate (1) opportunities for co-operation and (2) measures for promoting health-enhancing physical activities across the entire Baltic Region. We will draft a plan, based on the cities' demands, to organise training in health-enhancing physical activities and co-operative projects in the region.

During the following years (2004-2006) we will (1) jointly seek funding for the implementation of the presented co-operative projects and (2) organise the relevant training.

#### IMPLEMENTATION IN 2003

In connection with the report, we will (1) encourage all of the cities in the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Network to organise an event as a part of the international "Day of Dance" in May, (2) organise, in connection with the closing seminar for the Interreg project in October, a conference on continued co-operative projects to be implemented with the cities of Estonia, (3) consult with the Swedish Healthy Cities Network on incorporating the Active Living ideologies in the start-up phase of the network and (4) report on the needs of strategies for health-enhancing physical activities.