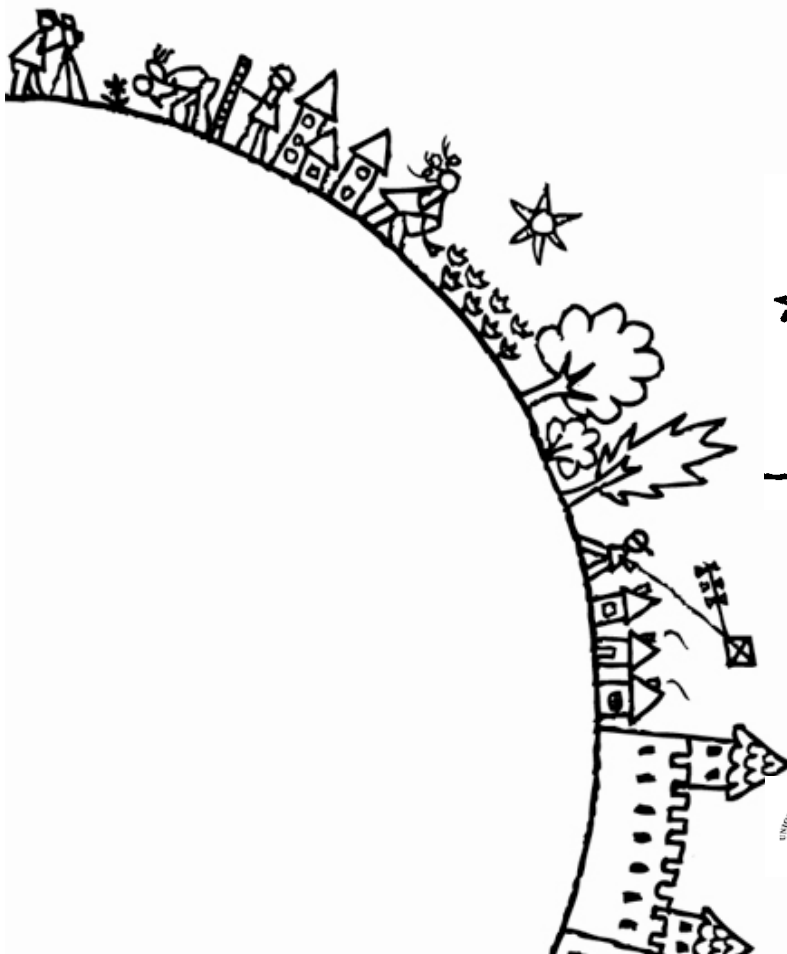




# OVERVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Guidance paper on Overview of the Integrated Management System** is a product of the Managing Urban Europe-25 project. The project was part-funded by the European Commission, DG Environment. The project was co-ordinated by Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat and is part of the UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities. The project Steering Group consisted of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, UNEP/Grid-Arendal, Bodensee Stiftung, and the University of West of England.

The publication reflects the author's views and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Commission.

Editorial board: Annika Claesson, Linda Talve, Kasia Bogucka, Christina Garzillo, Marion Hammerl, Claudia Heberlein, Daniela Paas, Andrea Philipp and Holger Robrecht.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cities and regions are complex and dynamic. The everyday choices of small and large activities in cities and regions all add in one way or another to the urban area's total impact on the environment.

Industries' choice of cleaning technologies, the ways in which school and hospital buildings are heated and the purchase policies of the public sector all exert impact on waste generation. Furthermore, the individual choices of every household add up to a large impact on the environment. The impact of our cities is also determined by actions taken outside city borders. Neighbouring cities' planning practices influence transport patterns. Regional and national authority policies influence the whole society in a nation. EU regulations and policies influence the national governments.

A present trend is that the cities' management requirements are increasing. Cities need to make sure they fulfil the legislation affecting them. Numerous EU directives (such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Air Quality Directive, Water Framework Directive or Fauna Flora Habitat Directive, etc.) require cities to monitor and report on these aspects.

However, a city is not just about managing environmental issues. We can easily agree that the very objective of local politics is to strive for the fulfilment of human needs. In reaching this goal, many different challenges must be faced, from offering adequate infrastructure to the inhabitants and coping with migration flows, taking care of children and the elderly, to dealing with climate change, enhancing job creation and maintaining local viable and dynamic economies to name but a few.

Dealing with these challenges, a city has only limited resources available. In summary, the fulfilment of our human needs as well as the human well-being of future generations depend on the availability, the quantity and the quality of our natural resources together with our social common good and financial means.

If urban Europe is to achieve sustainable development, it requires efficient tools that will facilitate the process of sustainability management and enable the actual translation of the numerous strategies and programs from the European and national levels into the actions carried out by governments at the local level.



## 2. WHAT IS INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

We can easily agree that the very objective of local politics is to strive for the fulfilment of human needs, utilizing the resources available. The fulfilment of our human needs as well as the future development of our human well-being with its political, economic, social and demographic elements depends on the availability, quantity and quality of our natural resources, our social common good and our financial means. Sustainable local politics add the responsibility for maintaining our natural capital base and developing our human capital (i.e., knowledge and skills) in a way that provides appropriate conditions and chances for following generations.

Accordingly, the Aalborg charter, signed by more than 2500 European local governments, arranges the dimensions of sustainable development - economy, society and environment - into a hierarchical structure and destroys the preconception that goals exist on an equal footing. Economy cannot be regarded as an end in itself. Rather it should help to improve our share of 'Gross national happiness' as opposed to GDP.

Instead, the concept of sustainable development must regard maintenance of our natural resources as a prerequisite for using economic means and activities to achieve human well-being and a better quality of life. This perspective views natural resources as "life support mechanisms" and a basis for society to live. Economic activities are the means to utilize these resources. Economic activities are the human activities that continually convert natural resources into human quality of life (goods, services). They are not just business practices but include every kind of economic behaviour of human beings – whether this occurs in a household, the office, one's leisure time, a local authority or in companies. Nevertheless, economic activities must be based on human rights (e.g., freedom of choice/action) and make the values of the activities accessible to society as a whole, in order to meet human needs.

*"We fundamentally depend on natural systems and resources for our existence and development. Our efforts to defeat poverty and pursue sustainable development will be in vain if environmental degradation and natural resource depletion continue unabated. At the country level, national strategies must include investments in improved environmental management and make the structural changes required for environmental sustainability."*

Kofi Annan, In larger Freedom, Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations for decision by Heads of State and Government in September 2005, Section D. Ensuring Environmental Sustainability, Point 57

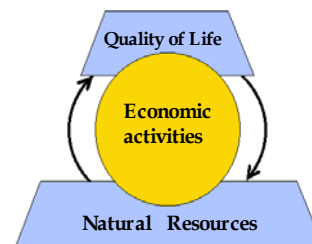


Figure: What should be sustainably managed?





We have seen three relationships developing here: first, the economy and the environmental (natural) resources serve as the basis for providing for human well-being, whether they be for the individual or for society as whole. Second, politico-environmental and social targets can only be achieved with the help of dynamic and “innovation-friendly” economic practices. Third, the social and economic components of society are not sustainable, indeed are not capable of existing without healthy environmental resources, i.e., a capable and functioning ecological balance. The last aspect underlines the fact that to achieve sustainable development in local authorities, we cannot afford to ignore these basic premises. But how to apply this understanding for managing development in an integrated way?

Basically, cities are facing challenges or problems in trying to reach sustainable development, which requires them to react by addressing the challenges. In some cases, this will result from legal requirements, in others from experiencing needs due to scarce or low quality resources (e.g., air quality, noise and lack of green space). Challenges are considered as such because they are threatening the quality and availability of natural resources. These challenges are to be addressed as issues or aspects of local sustainable development.

Sustainability issues or aspects can thus be defined as a structural category to describe a single environmental or sustainability aspect affecting one or several natural resources or common goods. They can be attributed to one or several indicators, as will be described in further sections especially with regard to target-setting.

It is worth noting here that the integrated management system seeks to include all dimensions of sustainable development in the management system of a local government, i.e., environmental, social and economic dimensions. It is consequently important to bear the implications of an inclusion of these issues in the management system in mind. However, it may be appropriate to start with the environmental dimensions and broaden the scope of the system at a later stage. Similarly, a gradual expansion to the urban area implies further issues to be put on the cities’ agenda as we go along.





### 3. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The integrated management system for urban areas has the following characteristics:

- **Relevance:** Addressing the needs of all relevant activities and actors is key for the system. It addresses key issues facing cities, common problems and common solutions, with potential for engagement with key issues facing all European cities. The system is the key to meeting the objectives of the EU's Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, and is organized round the issues addressed in the Aalborg Commitments.
- **Functional perspective:** The system addresses the urban area, irrespective of administrative boundaries and degree of local authority power. This means that all relevant impacts on the environment and sustainable development of the municipality are to be considered: impacts subject to the responsibility of the municipality (involving the private economy and citizens) as well as the impact of the activities of all actors (municipality and stakeholders) on neighbouring municipalities and cities.
- **Legal compliance:** The system assists the urban area's legal compliance.
- **Continuous improvement towards sustainability:** The system assists the urban area's continual measurable improvement towards sustainability. To this end, it has a periodic and cyclical nature.
- **Strategic orientation:** The system is a mechanism to inform (political) decision-making and support implementation. To this end, it focuses on strategic rather than operational issues. An environmental management system implemented in a private company or public institution is detailed in its scope. On the other hand, the urban integrated management system provides a strategic framework for sustainable urban development.
- **Mainstreaming:** The system is organized centrally in the city management. Regular involvement of the central political body in target setting and evaluation will ensure political commitment, legitimisation and maximised impacts. The process is subject to continuous review and assessment on an annual basis in line with the prime annual budget cycles.
- **Decentralised implementation:** The coordination of the system is based within the local administration. However, the strategic goals and targets are to be operationalized and implemented via a range of actors, including administrative departments, private companies and relevant stakeholders. The system allows for deriving the specific goals and targets of these as well as for 'communication' with their instruments (e.g., environmental management system in a private entity) using existing (sectoral) instruments such as land use planning, air quality management, water quality management and transport planning, etc.
- **Integration:** The system ensures horizontal integration across various departments and engagement with all relevant stakeholders in the city, and vertical integration by addressing the local, regional and national spheres of government.
- **Inclusive:** The system allows for appropriate involvement of urban stakeholders and provide for transparency and communication in decision-making and evaluation.





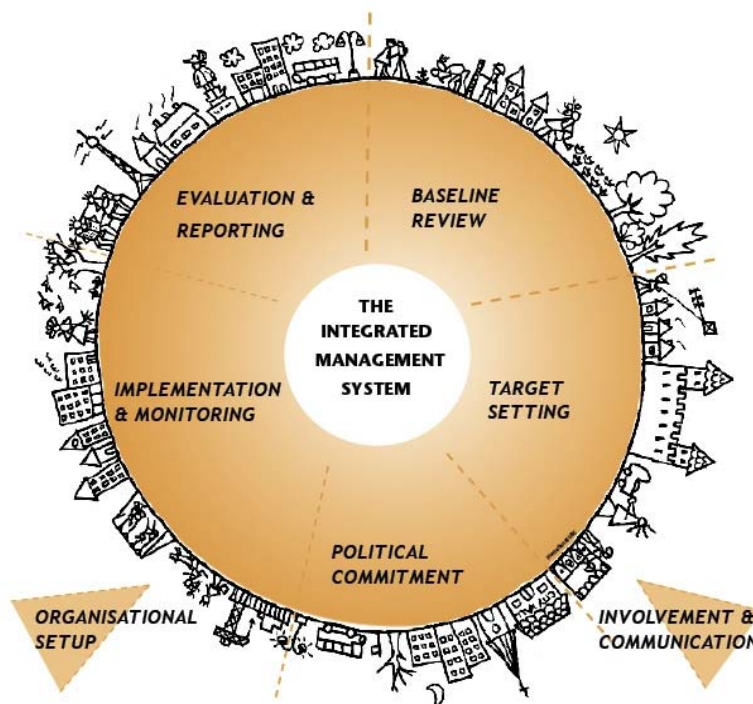
- **Adaptability:** Cities are different in size, economic level, localization, what activities they contain and in the organization. The management system is adaptable to variations in local contexts.
- **Complementary:** There are several environmental management instruments (i.e., systems and tools) in use today. The urban integrated management system does not replace existing and applied environmental management instruments in cities, but builds on them as well as coordinating and integrating existing (sectoral) instruments such as land use planning, air quality management, water quality management, transport planning, etc.
- **Evolutionary:** The system builds on existing experiences with environmental management systems rather than "reinventing the wheel". The strength and advantages of either of them are combined to the better for urban integrated management.
- **Gradual expansion:** The cities can gradually expand the system in scale and scope to include various aspects, actors and spheres of government. Through the integration of social and economic dimensions, the urban integrated management system will develop to include all sustainability dimensions in the management system.



#### 4. THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: STEP-BY-STEP

The integrated management system for managing the urban area consists of five major steps that are repeated in annual cycles. These steps are graphically illustrated below and described in further detail in their own sections. Although the system follows an annual cycle, full revision will be required only every 3-5 years, if evaluation of achievements and results at the end of the cycle does not suggest reconsideration.

In cases where there are various environmental management systems implemented on the level of departments or municipal/private companies, the framework system will interact with these environmental management systems by providing the strategic framework.





#### 4.1. BASELINE REVIEW

The baseline review will be undertaken in respect of the current situation. It includes

- assessing the local situation with regards to environmental and sustainability issues
- mapping the legal requirements
- mapping the political priorities: current political agenda, stakeholder consultation of key issues
- the mapping of emerging issues and trends: legal/administrative landscape, environmental trends and risks
- the mapping of responsibilities and organizational set-up
- evaluating the local situation
- distributing public information about the outcomes of the baseline review
- an annual update / 3-5 years' revision (depending on the outcome of the evaluation)

*Organizational remark: In this stage there could also be input through stakeholder consultation. There are various methods that can be applied to the baseline review. The baseline review may be part of a peer-to-peer activity. A classical assessment in accordance with the pressures state impact response framework or SWOT analysis represents further methods. These various methods can be applied in combination or 'stand-alone'*

Output: Baseline Review

#### 4.2. TARGET SETTING

- Priority setting: significant issues, priorities (Strategic Programme)
- Formulation of a vision
- Target-setting and selection of indicators
- Setting up an appropriate organizational structure to run the system
- Action plan: responsibilities, time frames, potential contribution to reach the targets
- Information and public consultation

*Organizational remark: At this stage there is a need for cross-sectoral stakeholder involvement and coordination with other authorities within the urban area*

Output: Strategic Programme and Action Plan





#### 4.3. POLITICAL COMMITMENT

- Debate on and approval of the vision, strategic programme and management system by the local government. The city itself can define the level of detail of the Strategic Programme as presented to the local government.
- Seeking partnership commitment: neighbouring local governments, regional/national authorities, private business/households (gradual expansion according to scope)
- Public information: Public information strategy (information and sensitization)

Organizational remark: consider various procedures to challenge decisions

Output: Approval of the Strategic Programme (and Action Plan)

#### 4.4. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- Refinement of action plan
- Ensure contributions of other partners
- Carry out actions
- Monitor actions taken and their effects, considering the targets
- Accounting monitoring results
- Collection and synthesis of monitoring results (accounting).
- Regular internal communication to all actors involved
- Corrective measures on action (arrow going back to before monitor actions)
- Information for stakeholders (further partner agreements)
- Public information

Output: Implemented action plan

#### 4.5. REPORTING AND EVALUATION

- Evaluation on the basis of monitoring results and pressures state impact response framework
- Report on actions and achievements with regard to the process and outcome
- Internal Audit (by the city itself or as germane to peer review), based on monitoring results
- Update of baseline review with balance (annual update: triennial revision)
- Political consideration of the report and evaluation and endorsement of the next management period.
- Public information about the evaluation report
- Potential external evaluation
- Every 3 – 5 years
- By an official auditor or alternative way = regional public authority or Official Auditor to audit the process (system) and peer review audit regarding contents
- Certification and public information

Output: Evaluation report





## 5. EXISTING PRACTICES ENCOUNTER THE SCOPE OF THE STEPS

The aim of the integrated management system is to avoid the duplication of existing environmental management systems and management tools in a city. A city-wide EMAS or ecoBUDGET process could fulfil the purposes of the urban integrated management system. However, experiences suggest an integration of these approaches utilizing their particular strengths for urban integrated management.

Furthermore, existing management instruments applied within the city should be integrated in order to carry out the individual steps and elements of the system. Examples of such instruments are state of the environment reports, local environmental action plans, indicators, local pollution registers and distance-to-target reporting. The framework will help to better coordinate existing instruments and operational plans by assembling the mosaic into one picture.





## 6. GRADUALLY EXPANDING THE SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE SYSTEM

In order to avoid overwhelming everyone, the system shall allow for gradual expansion of scope and contents using a modular approach.

The first, the territorial expansion, will apply the integrated management system to the whole urban area. Very few cities have applied environmental management systems for the urban area, which usually extends beyond the city's administrative boundaries. Currently, environmental management systems are mostly used for municipal departments, but there is a need for expansion to local authorities' core targets, i.e., strategic and operational planning and programmes. This can be done through the use of an appropriate selection of indicators and targets.

The second, an actor-related expansion, will include stakeholders in the city and cooperation with neighbours.

The third, a topic-related expansion, will integrate further dimensions of sustainability into the environmental management system and will develop into an integrated management system focusing on environmental, social and economic dimensions.

### 6.1. AALBORG COMMITMENTS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR THE EXPANDED SYSTEM

The Aalborg Commitment is used as a reference document to identify direct and indirect sustainability aspects of urban areas and thus enable the integration of all sustainability dimensions into the integrated management system. Cities may select areas where they want to focus action and can make progress. (=priority setting) The first step, however, is to identify the areas in which the city has already been implementing action and have achievements to present. (=baseline review)

The Aalborg Commitments were adopted in 2004 within the context of the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign and have been signed by more than 500 municipalities (February 2008). The Aalborg Commitments set some important policy guidelines for municipal sustainability. They require a management process to carry out the Aalborg Commitments monitoring review (see the table below).





Aalborg Commitment element	Time schedule	Compares with the Integrated Management system element
<p>Baseline Review</p> <p><i>We agree to produce an integrated Aalborg Commitments baseline review as a starting point for our target setting process within 12 months following the date of our signature. This review will include a policy context, refer to existing political commitments and describe current challenges.</i></p>	<p>Within 12 months after signature</p>	<p>Baseline Review</p>
<p>Target Setting</p> <p><i>We agree to enter into a local participatory target setting process that incorporates existing Local Agenda 21 or other local sustainability action planning and takes into consideration the results of the local baseline review and to prioritise our tasks, aiming to address the ten Commitments. We agree to set individual local targets within 24 months following the date of our signature, and to set time frames related to the targets that are suitable to demonstrate progress on our Commitments.</i></p>	<p>Within 24 months after signature</p>	<p>Target-setting council approval</p>
<p><i>We agree to make a regular Aalborg Commitments monitoring review of our achievements available to our citizens. We agree to regularly provide information on our targets and our progress to the European Sustainable Cities &amp; Towns Campaign and, through this co-operation, to review progress and learn from each other.</i></p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> Monitoring review by 2010</p>	<p>Evaluation and Reporting</p>
<p>Subsequent monitoring reviews</p>	<p>Scheduled in 5-year cycles</p>	<p>All elements of framework management system</p>





The “Aalborg Commitments” are regarded as voluntary commitments and describe ten fields of action (see table below) and 50 key activities for municipal sustainable development, also proposing concrete actions.

Field of activity	Commitment
A1. Governance	We are committed to energising our decision-making processes through increased participatory democracy.
A2. Local Management towards sustainability:	We are committed to implementing effective management cycles, from formulation through implementation to evaluation.
A3. Natural Common Goods	We are committed to fully assuming our responsibility to protect, to preserve, and to ensure equitable access to natural common goods.
A4. Responsible Consumption and Lifestyle Choices	We are committed to adopting and facilitating the prudent and efficient use of resources and to encouraging sustainable consumption and production.
A5. Planning and design	We are committed to a strategic role for urban planning and design in addressing environmental, social, economic, health and cultural issues for the benefit of all.
A6. Better Mobility, less traffic	We recognise the interdependence of transport, health and environment and are committed to strongly promoting sustainable mobility choices.
A7. Local action for health	We are committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of our citizens.
A8. Vibrant and local sustainable economy	We are committed to creating and ensuring a vibrant local economy that gives access to employment without damaging the environment.
A9. Social Equity and Justice	We are committed to securing inclusive and supportive communities.
A10. Local to Global	We are committed to assuming our global responsibility for peace, justice, equity, sustainable development and climate protection.





## 7. CONTACT POINTS WITH OTHER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The integrated management system must allow for communication with existing management systems in departments or private companies. In all steps in the cycle of the integrated management system, there are contact points between this strategic framework management system and various environmental management systems implemented in private companies, public institutions, etc. The main contact points are:

- **Baseline review (revision 3-5 years):** Key information from entity level baseline reviews should be integrated into the city-wide baseline review. This should take the following into consideration: information harvest, input from environmental reports, sustainability reports, SWOT analysis, etc.
- **Target-setting:** Entities that have implemented environmental management systems would be expected to have raised awareness and readiness to contribute to a city-wide process. This should take into consideration: stakeholder involvement, objectives of existing environmental programmes and/or Strategic Environmental Assessment, Local Agenda 21 agreements and action plans, other approved objectives, targets, relevant commitments
- **Political Commitment:** Cities have limited executive powers over private companies, households and other spheres of government. Thus, partnerships have to be formed to ensure commitments to targets.
- **Implementation and monitoring:** Key information from monitoring of progress in entity level management systems has to be harvested by the urban integrated management system. This should take into consideration: monitoring progress including existing monitoring activities, legally required monitoring
- **Reporting and evaluation:** Key information from entity level evaluation should provide insight for the city level system evaluation. This should take into consideration: existing/legally required reporting





## 8. PREREQUISITES FOR THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In order for a local government to introduce the integrated management system, some organizational prerequisites must be met. There are two aspects to be considered here:

1. Complete authorization and support by the council and the senior management, who must feel ownership of the instrument.
2. Clarity and unambiguity in the cooperation between various departments and with other participants.

Two elements of the integrated management system provide a more detailed outline of how to meet these prerequisites, i.e., through the organizational setup and the way in which communication and involvement of stakeholders are utilized in all steps of the system.

The roles of the organisational set-up can briefly be described as in the graphic below. (see more in section Organisational Set up)



An analysis of the existing communication and involvement elements and structures forms the basis for a thorough analysis of relevant stakeholders and their involvement in each of the steps of the system. By establishing and publicly communicating overall rules for communication and involvement of the city, stakeholders and departments have a holistic and strategic view of how to link it to make the integrated management system more effective.

