

Tallinn – BlueHealth Stakeholder Workshop April 16th, 2019

BlueHealth experts from RIVM and EMÜ hosted a workshop in Tallinn¹ on April 16th, 2019. 16 experts participated, providing a great diversity of expertise ranging from the environmental protection and nature conservation, water management, planning and municipality development, public health, social affairs, cultural endowment and community engagement. The objective of the workshop was to identify values and ambitions for the city of Tallinn regarding its urban blue spaces and related interventions, identify the most relevant global economic, societal, and environmental trends, and investigate the possible impacts on a local scale.

Key values and trends

The workshop consisted of several elements. First, an overview of the BlueHealth project was presented and an introduction to scenario development was given. Thereafter, participants were asked to express their key values regarding BlueHealth for the future and then to rate certain future trends and to assess how relevant they were to Tallinn city. Participants scored them based on local relevancy and uncertainty.

Key values identified were:

1. 'Access for all to blue spaces',
2. 'Preserving biodiversity',
3. 'Water quality',
4. 'Rediscovery waterfront of the sea, lakes and small urban rivers',
5. 'Health and wellbeing',
6. 'Year round recreation and environmental education'.

The trends ranked as most relevant for Tallinn and BlueHealth included (score between brackets):

1. Further loss of biodiversity and other ecological impacts (9),
2. Climate change (7),
3. More waterfront development for urban regeneration(7),
4. Changing population composition (7),
5. Digitalisation of society (6),
6. Changes in income inequality (5),
7. Increasing life expectancy (5).

The trends ranked as most uncertain for Tallinn and BlueHealth included:

1. Changing institutional and governance structures (6),
2. Climate change (5),
3. Growing public-private partnerships (5),
4. Increasing individualisation (5),
5. Growing of the gross domestic product (5),
6. Migration (5)

Discussion on future impacts of trends

¹ Venue: Erinevate Tubade Klubi, Telliskivi 60-A1-65, Tallinn 10412, Estonia

The second part of the workshop focused on the discussion how these trends may have impact at Tallinn city level from a particular key value. The group was split into two and each group focused on a key value to discuss. Group one explored 'Access for all to blue spaces' as the key value. The underlying trends selected as most relevant for this value were an aging population, growing income inequalities and further waterfront development. Group two explored: 'Preserving biodiversity' as the key value. The trends selected as most relevant, were climate change, further loss of biodiversity and other ecological impacts by more waterfront development for urban regeneration.

This process led to the identification of various building blocks and factors to take into consideration when designing BlueHealth interventions. For instance, the preparedness for failure points in development or governance of interventions, to reverse the process or action; services for society and waterfront development (green and blue) increases physical, mental, social, economic health in the city but it could also be loss with regard to biodiversity.

Reflection and evaluation pacts

The workshop ended with a reflection and short evaluation. Participants indicated that it was an interesting workshop, with a lot of information, although the representation of certain stakeholder expertise (e.g. health) could be better. One of the participants expressed how she enjoyed talking about trends.

The importance was stressed to translate and efficiently communicate the results of the Stakeholder Workshop on BlueHealth Futures series to all relevant stakeholders, inter alia those public institutions which can use this to achieve their statutory goals.

Participants wanted to stay connected to the project and several participants expressed their will to learn from other BlueHealth cities, to compare topics for different cities.

Some quotes of the day

"Open the sea for quality recreation"

"What can we learn from other Blue Health cities"

"Trends are your friends"

"The car crazy, frenzy (wild behaviour) society"