

Annual report **2011**

EKOPOLIS FOUNDATION

Komenského 21

974 01 Banská Bystrica

Phone.: +421 48 414 52 59, 414 54 78

email: ekopolis@ekopolis.sk

www.ekopolis.sk

Dear Friends

In the 2011 our Foundation celebrated its 20th anniversary. Anniversaries are considered to be a good opportunity for reflections. So what are the most important thoughts when it comes to Ekopolis? Certainly important is the fact that Ekopolis is today one of most important source of support for environmental projects. Also, the Ekopolis manages to link the interests of local groups, NGOs, schools and municipalities with engagement of corporate donors and public funding schemes. It would be naïve and inappropriate to overestimate our own significance and impact; if the society faces so extensive crisis of values, resources and finance, we cannot act as if this has nothing to do with us. But we should and we do ask ourselves if what we have done makes sense and mainly what we do next. Let the answer to the question about the sense be those thousands of activities and project where the main motivation was to do something for a better world, said with little exaggeration. And what is the next? We are committed to be a partner and a source of support for those looking for a way, looking for answers, looking for small and local solutions. It makes sense to us.

Peter Medved'
March 2012

Our profile

The Ekopolis Foundation bears 21 years of knowledge of the management of grant programs specialized in civic society democracy and environmental sustainability. We support activities of hundreds of NGOs in accordance with their actual needs, flexibly and with no unnecessary bureaucracy.

Since 1991 we have supported 2,585 projects of NGOs, municipalities, and initiatives by 12 mil. 133,760 Euros. We realize our own projects on the national and international level. We are a member of the Environmental Partnership Association together with foundations in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. The foundation is a member of the European Greenways Association which is oriented on the building, support and promotion of the paths for motorless traffic in Europe, and also the member of Civilscape – an international network of NGOs from all over Europe in support of the European Landscape Convention. We are a Fair – Trade Partner that supports the ideas of fair business.

Our vision is for an advanced civic society where the citizens realize their responsibility for societal development and environmental issues. A society with citizens who are interested in participating in public policy, have the courage to adopt a critical stance and who are concerned with helping avoid detrimental conditions for future generations.

In 2011 we supported 94 projects with the amount of 255,925 €. However, a higher value is the contribution of these projects for people and our environment we have managed to beautify and revive together.

Calendar of our activities in 2011

JANUARY

- **Iron Curtain Trail meeting:** At the beginning of January the Ekopolis Foundation hosted a 2 day long meeting of project managers of the Iron Curtain Trail. It is a cycling trail, 6,800 km long, which is in preparation. It will continue along the previous border between Ost (East?) and West. It will lead from the North Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea.
- **Ekopolis Foundation opened 2nd round of Rest beyond the City Program:** In October 2010 the Ekopolis Foundation and the HEINEKEN SLOVAKIA company opened the 1st round of the program. The 2nd round was opened from January 17 to February 25.
- **Public Spaces planning training in Senec:** More than 20 participants took part of the training of public spaces planning and creation in Senec on January 20 - 22. The three days long training was focused on deputies from towns and villages supported by the Public Spaces Program 2011.
- **Qualified projects in Green Belt Program:** Before the deadline on November 30, 2011, a total of 333 applications were obtained – a number that has not been gained before. Chosen were 115 applications in the 1st round, which were qualified to the 2nd round.

FEBRUARY

- **Your good idea can be supported by Think Big:** In cooperation with Telefónica O2 the 2nd year of the paneuropean grant program Think Big was opened. This program supports the ideas of young people from 15 to 24 years old, from the whole of Slovakia,
- **Vote for the European Tree:** Until March 7, 2011 you could find on www.treeoftheyear.org a public voting forum of an international inquiry for the European Tree of the Year. In its first year the forum opened the Partnership Foundation in cooperation with the Ekopolis Foundation,
- **Your 2% of Income Tax for Greenways:** in 2011 you could support the activities of the Ekopolis Foundation focused on increasing cycling safety using 2 % of Income Tax; the obtained amount has been used to support the Greenways Program – Trails for healthy living
- **In 2nd round of Rest beyond the City program we obtained 23 projects:** Before the deadline of the 2nd round of the program we obtained 23 projects; together with 9 projects from the 1st round, the Advisory Board evaluated 31 projects distributing 175,093 €.

MARCH

- **Aplend company supports the Ekopolis Foundation:** Since November 2009 our foundation has been supported by the Aplend company from Martin. For each accommodated customer the company donates 1 € to support our activities.

- **Lime Tree from Romania is the European Tree:** The winner of the 1st year of the international enquiry for the European Tree of the Year was a 500 year old lime tree from Romania which obtained 23,298 votes. The Slovak alder tree from Dubinné ranked on 4th place,
- **Green Chances – final conference of Block Grant EMVO – TUR:** Green Chances was the theme of the conference organized by the Ekopolis Foundation in March 2011 in Banská Bystrica. Its objective was to present the results of supported projects and to create the opportunity for exchange of information focused on environmental protection,
- **Rest beyond the City program supported 5 projects of public spaces reconstruction:** the members of the Advisory Board chose 5 projects from 31 applications, which obtained 6,000 € as well as education and assistance during the planning process and realization,
- **In 5th year of Green Belt program 20 green areas were supported:** the 20 most interesting projects focused on renovation of urban or rural environment were supported by the 5th year of the Green Belt Program,
- **Ekopolis Foundation has opened the 9th year of Tree of the Year enquiry:** On the 1st spring day the 9th year of the Tree of the Year enquiry by the Ekopolis Foundation opened. Its objective is to pay attention to the most interesting, rare, beautiful, or otherwise appealing tree
- **230 applications in Think Big program:** the 2nd year of the program was opened in February by the Ekopolis Foundation and Telefónica O2 Slovakia; before the deadline of March 15, 2011, there were 230 projects from the whole of Slovakia submitted,
- **Public Space planned by inhabitants in Velké Kapušany:** The first planning meeting of public space creation and reconstruction was organized in Velke Kapusany on March 25 and 26, 2011. It was prepared by the informal civic group. The project was supported by the 7th year of the Public Spaces program of the Ekopolis Foundation.

APRIL

- **Ekopolis took part in URBAN E.T. in Ružomberok:** Project URBAN E.T. is a special and a long term cultural and social project, which captures the topic of "town" as a living structure and organism. It is a festival of city planning and architecture.
- **Information day of European Landscape Convention:** the Slovak wood and forestry library in Zvolen the Information Day of ELC was organized. After many contributions, a special film was presented of the Ekopolis Foundation, which was nominated for the European Landscape Award 2011.
- **51 supported projects in Think Big program:** 51 projects of young people from the whole of Slovakia were chosen by the Advisory Board of the program.
- **Public space planning meeting in Martovce:** On April 15 and 16, 2011, residents of Martovice, in the Komarno district, planned for the reconstruction of the park in the center of the village,
- **Volunteers in Sládkovičovo and Stupava celebrated Earth Day by greenery planting:** For Earth Day (April 22) special events were organized by the Ekopolis Foundation in where volunteers planted 72 trees in two localities in Slovakia. The event was supported by the A.B.I.E.S. company,
- **From Living Trails program about 60 km of tourists trails will be supported:** In the 4th year of the Living Trails program, which is focused on renovation of tourists trails in Slovakia, 3 projects were supported with 7,000 €.
- **Living Energy Fund will support the projects of renewable energy sources:** the Living Energy Fund was opened in 2009. It supports projects focused on energy saving and education. The fund is provided in cooperation with ZSE Energia, S.A and the Ekopolis Foundation.

MAY

- **Let us renovate the mineral spring in Banská Bystrica:** the decision about the future of a surrounding mineral spring called „Medokýš“ in Banská Bystrica could influence the local townspeople. A public planning meeting was organized in May,
- **Young people trained in Banská Bystrica:** as a part of Think Big program, 20 supported young people were educated,
- **Special Jury Award for Landscape:** A Special Jury Award for the Landscape of the Council of Europe representing the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape was awarded to the Ekopolis Foundation "The grant programmes are for local communities to shape their surroundings into a place where they are happy to live".
- **In Banská Bystrica the reconstruction of Bike Park started:** The Bike Park is one of 51 supported projects in the Think Big program. Extreme C.A. obtained 3.500 € for its reconstruction.

- **Annual Report 2010 of the Ekopolis Foundation:** The overview of the programs, projects, activities, grants, financial part can be found in the Annual Report. It has been visually simulated by student pictures from the Faculty of Ecology and Environmentalistics at Technical University in Zvolen.
- **Ekopolis Foundation at the seminar „Water in urban surrounding“:** At the international workshop organized by the National Trust in cooperation with REC Slovakia and Government Offices, Martina Paulíková, a program manager of the Ekopolis Foundation, presented a long term knowledge (goal?) for public spaces planning and realization,
- **91 trees were nominated in Tree of the Year enquiry:** the people of Slovakia nominated up to 91 trees,
- **Sustainable Tourism Protocol of the Carpathian Convention:** Ministries responsible for tourism in 7 countries of the Carpathian Convention signed the protocol on May 26, in Bratislava. In its preparation the Ekopolis Foundation actively participated as well as served as one of the leaders of this process in Slovakia,
- **In Detva the young people planned the meeting space, in Šarišské Michaľany organized Graffiti Jam:** As a part of the Think big program, there was public meeting for the project „We can create a better world“ in partnership with the Roma Alliance in Detva. In Šarišské Michaľany the young people organized a special event focused on graffiti painting.

JUNE

- **New educational trail in the High Tatra:** An educational trail was opened in the locality of Rakytovské plieska – Jamské pleso. The trail was opened by the Ekopolis Foundation together with partners at the special event „Ways from the calamity.“ The project was supported from the Tatra Fund by the Ekopolis Foundation with 322,000 €.
- **Festival „cementARTňa“ organized in Banská Bystrica:** An unconventional festival of art was organized in the building of a former cement mill. The project was supported by 500 € from the Think Big program
- **We are more famous and more credible:** Our objective in the field of communication and reputation is to increase the connection and credibility of foundation and monitor them through representative searches. From research in June, compared with 2009, we are only known by 10 % of respondents. In 2009 it was 4.2 %.
- **Workshop of educational needs for Think Big projects:** the Children of Slovakia Foundation in cooperation with the Ekopolis Foundation and Telefónica O2 Slovakia invited young people to a special training workshop,
- **Revived recreational area near the Váh river in Komarno:** Thanks to the Rest beyond the City program, the town of Komarno has more opportunities for relaxing and spending free time as the Váh river, near the ox-bow, was renewed as part of a recreational zone. The town of Komarno obtained 5,200€ for this project.

JULY

- **New park for camping opened during Fest Anča Festival in Žilina:** Fest Anča is a three-day long international festival of animated films. During the festival a new camp opened, reconstructed by Truc sphérique C.A. The Think Big program donated 7,000 € for this project.
- **Living Energy Fund supported 11 projects focused on renewable energy sources:** In its 3rd year the fund supported 11 projects with 30,000 €,
- **Vote for Tree of the Year 2011:** Public voting for the Tree of the Year was opened at the Pohoda festival in Trenčín. Polls were open until the end of September in which voters could choose from 12 finalists.
- **Supported projects in Greenways program:** Support was focused on events increasing public awareness in big towns about cycling. We supported the conference for professionals, but also volunteered renovating trails in surrounding areas of Banská Štiavnica.
- August
- **Educational trails in Žiarska valley opened:** The objective of a 5.3 km long trail is to present the residents of its history and natural values. The project was supported by the Living Trails Program,
- **Training of social and personal competences in Think Big program:** Training was organized in Zvolen and Bratislava,
- **New square in front of the cinema in Kremnica:** The square in front of the Akropola cinema in Kremnica was reconstructed by young volunteers throughout spring and summer. The support of 7,000 € was obtained by 1115 C.A. from the Think Big program,
- **In Prešov they presented the project and took part in the training:** At the biggest estate called Sekčov in Prešov, a public planning meeting was organized by scouts. Young people presented their projects supported by the Think Big program,

- **Renovation of 5 public spaces culminates:** The residents of Handlová, Iža, Martovce, Veľké Kapušany and Prša reconstructed their public spaces supported by the Public Spaces Program.

SEPTEMBER

- **Discussion about public spaces "Relax on the water front in Trenčín":** A public debate was held to discuss the future of the popular recreational space by the river Vah, organized by the Center of environmental activities as a part of the Rest beyond the City Program,
- **Theater Day in Humenné:** The project of a theatrical group was supported by the Think Big program with 500 €,
- **Cyklofest 2011:** the Civic initiative of cycling in Banská Bystrica in cooperation with the Ekopolis foundation organized a traditional event for the occasion of the European mobility week,
- **In Liptovský Mikuláš they revived park:** In Liptovský Mikuláš, in Okoličné, a new park was created. Tatry C.A. obtained 2,500 € from the Green Belt program,
- **The waterfront in Trenčín revived by „Relax bay“:** At the waterfront in Trenčín a special bay for recreation and relaxing was built. The project was supported by the Rest beyond the City Program,
- **Final conference of Central Europe Project and Thematic Seminar:** The deputies of the Ekopolis Foundation took part in the 3rd Thematic Seminar and Final Conference of UrbSpace project on September 28 - 30, 2011. The meeting was organised at the Vienna Technical University, which was one of the 13 project partners from 8 countries.

OCTOBER

- **The volunteers of Telefónica O2 Slovakia helped in Banská Bystrica and Stupava:** For the occasion of the European Voluntary Day the Telefónica company helped more than 130 employees with projects supported in the Think big program.
- **Michalovce reconstructed the surrounding of Baňa lake:** Baňa – the place for relaxing – is the point of the project supported by the Rest beyond the City Program with 5,200 €.
- **Ekopolis Foundation and SLOVNAFT company opened 6th year of Green Belt Program:** The company financed the program with 68,000 €.
- **Tree of the Year 2011 is a lime tree from Lipany:** The winner of the Tree of the Year enquiry is a 320 year old lime tree from Lipany (Sabinov district) which obtained 1699 votes. It will represent Slovakia in the European Tree of the Year competition.
- **Conclusion of the project in Handlová:** The project of the non – formal residents group called „Reviving the relationships in community“ was supported by the Public Spaces Program of the Ekopolis Foundation.
- **Bratislava revived the space on Mlyny thanks to Utopia, C.A.:** The members of C.A. renewed the public space near the Students house. For their project Permacultural Mlyny – community forming and education they obtained 5,400 € from the Rest beyond the City program.
- **Veľká Fatra and Low Tatras renewed the tourist marking for 53,5 km:** The members of the Slovak Tourist Club Lokomotíva Banská Bystrica renewed tourist trails and infrastructure in national parks in Veľká Fatra and Low Tatras for a length of 53.5 km. For the project they obtained 2,000 € from the Living Trails grant program,
- **Mineral spring in Banská Bystrica renewed:** The renovation of a mineral spring is a project result of the Municipality of Banská Bystrica in cooperation with the Civic Cycloinitiative in the Rest beyond the City Program,
- **Special award of the jury for the Landscape of the Council of Europe for Ekopolis Foundation:** A special award of the jury for the Landscape of the Council of Europe representing the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape was awarded to the Ekopolis Foundation with the project "The grant programmes for local communities to shape their surroundings into a place where they are happy to live."

NOVEMBER

- **In Veľké Kapušany the inhabitants renewed their place:** Neglected and less used public spaces in Veľké Kapušany has a fresh new face and usage. The residents obtained for their project „Our habitation – our space“ 5,500 € from the Public Spaces Program.
- **Renewed park in Prša destroyed by floods:** the Municipality of Prša in the Lučenec district was hit by floods in the summer of 2010. The municipality obtained for the project of its renovation from the Public Spaces Program.
- **Created free time park in the center of Iža:** In Iža, a village in the Komárno district, the previous Garden of Health was reconstructed by local residents. The municipality obtained 5,500 € from the Public Spaces Program for this project,

- **Special Seminar prepared before the celebration of 20th anniversary of the Ekopolis Foundation where in the award for the approach to landscape was presented:** On November 30, the seminar for „Town in landscape, people in town“ was organized. The special part of evening celebration was the presentation of the special Award of international jury of Landscape of the Council of Europe 2011.

DECEMBER

- **In Slovakia you can find 72 facilities with Cyclists welcome! Logo:** Restaurants, hotels, apartments, information centers, castles, museums, swimming pools and other facilities for tourism can increase their attractiveness for cyclists by obtaining a Cyclists welcome! Certificate. The scheme has been provided by Ekopolis Foundation since 2008.
- **The ideas for reviving of relax places can obtain the support from Rest beyond the City Program:** We opened the 2nd year of the Rest beyond the City Program.
- **We opened the selection procedure for members of Advisory Boards** of Block Grant for NGOs and support of partnership in program of Slovak – Swiss cooperation.

Our programs and projects

1. Sustainability and green activities

BLOCK GRANT EMVO – TUR

The final conference of the Block Grant EMVO - TUR entitled „Green Chances“ was organized by the Ekopolis Foundation in Banská Bystrica in March 2011. Presented were the results and output of some supported projects and discussion of the actual situation in environmental and nature protection. The conference was favoured with talk of Her Majesty Mrs. Trine Skymoien, Ambassadors of the Norwegian Kingdom.

34 projects were supported with 2,379,000 € from 2007 to 2010 in the program. In regard to amount of financial contribution per project (30,000 – 107,000 €) and the length of project realization, the Block Grant represented principal /basic and strategic support for environmental NGOs. Block Grant was financed by the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism, Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Budget of the Slovak Republic.

PEOPLE FOR TREES PROGRAM

Tree of the Year

Already in the 9th year of the Tree of the Year, enquiry was opened by the Ekopolis Foundation in May. The aim of the nationwide enquiry of the most interesting, rare, beautiful, or otherwise appealing tree is to highlight the importance of trees in our lives and arouse people's interest in their environment and its protection. There were 79 nominated trees in 2010. The expert jury chose 12 finalists from them. The title Tree of the Year 2010 has been awarded to an 850 year old oak tree from Dubinné, which obtained 911 votes and financial contribution of 333 € for its treatment. The partners of the enquiry in 2010 were Dajama publishing house, Artforum bookshop and ISA Slovensko (International Society of Arboriculture). Financial contribution for the treatment of three winning trees was provided by the Foundation of Slovak Savings Bank.

GREEN BELT

A surprising number of 333 applications in the first round of the 5th year of this program was obtained by the Ekopolis Foundation. In total 20 projects obtained the financial support in the sum of 56 thousand €. The general partner of the program is SLOVNAFT, S.C.

The objective of the program is to create, renew or revive the ecologically valuable areas and trails in cooperation with NGOs, local communities and schools, kindergartens or free time centers. The program supports sustainable care of ecologically valuable areas, which are used by the public and support the concept of nature preservation and sustainability.

2. Planning and renovation of public spaces

PUBLIC SPACES PROGRAM

The 7th year of the Public Spaces Program was announced by the Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with long-term partner ČSOB – Financial Group. The priority of the 7th year was the reconstruction of public spaces destroyed by floods in 2010. Five projects were chosen and each given the amount of 5000€ by the Advisory Board. During their realization, citizens were involved in the planning and renovation of public spaces.

URBSPACE

The idea of the UrbSpace project follows several years of experience from the Public Spaces Program. In 2009, we started to cooperate intensively with the team of experts from 8 European countries in an international project UrbSpace. REC Slovakia decided to accept the Leading Partner role. The goal of the program was to experience exchange and development of planning and creation of some good urban environment. The project was supported by the Central Europe Program and the European Regional and Development Fund.

REST BEYOND THE NEST

The pilot year of this program was opened by the Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with Heineken Slovensko, S.C. Its objective is to support communities living together with the renovation and reviving of recreational areas in the background of towns with more than 35,000 inhabitants. The financial support of 6000€ was obtained for the 5 best projects presented during 2011.

3. Green tourism and cycling

LIVING TRAILS

The objective of the program is to support the careful renewal of protected areas in Slovakia, and development of recreational and educational functions of Slovak nature. Financial support is directed towards restoration and improvement of tourist trails, educational paths and public spaces used by tourists. The partner of the program is TOYOTA MOTOR SLOVAKIA. In 2011 3 projects were supported in 4 national parks by 7000 € with the result of 70 km of marked trails.

GREENWAYS

The objective of the program is the development of cycling as a concept of transport or tourism. that the goal is for bikes to serve citizens and residents for recreation al purposes, sports, every day transport to work, school, shopping, or for travelling around the country. Through the program we support the development of biking trails, but also the increase of awareness and conditions for its development. In 2011, six projects were supported by a total amount of 7000€ which lead to an organized conference, 3 public events renewed biking trails in 2 localities.

Cyclists Welcome!

Tourist facilities and destinations can increase the attractiveness of their services for cyclists when they obtain the certificate "Cyclists Welcome!". Since May 2008, this certification has been provided in Slovakia by the Ekopolis Foundation. The objective of the certification is to increase the number of facilities which are cyclist friendly and support cycle tourism in Slovakia. In 2011 the scheme was supported by the Allianz Foundation. The logo of a smiling bicycle is owned by 72 tourist facilities in Slovakia.

TRIXI MOBIL

The objective for the Trixi mobil project is to promote ecological, non-motorized transport, support the Greenways program and to contribute to the increasing attractiveness of tourism in Slovakia. This modern ecological tricycle, where a rider can comfortably take two passengers, was started in 1997 in Berlin. Since 2007, the Ekopolis Foundation owns 5 trimobils and is the only provider in Slovakia.

You can see them at the Pohoda Music Festival 2011 in Trenčín, during the Envirofilm Festival in Banská Bystrica and Zvolen, and seasonally (June – September) in Košice, Žilina, and Piešťany.

4. Renewable energy sources

LIVING ENERGY FUND

The Living Energy Fund is a result of the cooperation of ZSE Energia, the Ekopolis Foundation, and customers of the company who support the development and use of renewable energy sources and express their responsible approach to economic electricity usage. For each MWh of electricity sold in the Living Energy Product, ZSE Energia contributes 3.30 Euro on behalf of the Living Energy Fund.

In its 3rd year the fund supported 11 investment and educational projects in the whole amount of 149.7 thousand €. These projects focused on renewable energy sources usage and energy saving.

5. Other activities

TATRAS FUND

The fund was founded in November 2004 by the Ekopolis Foundation after the devastating storm in the Tatras. During its five years of existence the fund has supported all in all 34 projects thanks to the contributions from many firms and thousands of donors. The support of the fund was aimed especially towards the renovation of forest areas. In June 2011 an educational trail opened in the locality of the Rakytovské Little Tarns - Jamské Tarn, which offers the visitors the opportunity to see and to know how nature in the Tatras and the people gradually coped with the results of the storm. The walk along the 4.5 km long path takes approximately two hours. The track leads across the medium to difficult mountain terrain and has five stops.

FORGOTTEN MONUMENTS

The Forgotten Monuments Program in partnership with CSOB Finance Group was aimed on the village Hodruša-Hámre in 2011, where it provided the amount of 46,000 Eur for the renovation of several small mining monuments. The main works were concentrated on the renewal of the portal "Down Cross-cut" heading towards the shaft Lill where there was a cave-in, renewed the portal of the cross-cut, and the area around it. Further on, nearby pillars of the former flyover of the narrow gauge railway above the road were repaired, the surrounding of the portals of the shafts "Golden Table", "Brennerská" and two resting places for tourists together with information panels were placed. Employees of CSOB organized the volunteer work for the renovation as well as for the seminar about the historical objects.

Since November 2009 the Ekopolis Foundation has been supported by the APLEND Company from Martin. This company contributes 1 € towards the foundation for each accommodated guest. In 2011 the Ekopolis Foundation was institutionally supported by the amount of 800 €. The amount was used for the activities of the foundation.

Support of the active approach to the environment and community

THINK BIG

The Think Big program was opened by Telefónica O2 Slovakia in cooperation with the Ekopolis Foundation and the Children of Slovakia Foundation in June 2010. The mission of the Think Big program is to motivate young people to create and realize their ideas and support their projects in the field of culture, sport, art, and environment. In the 1st year 240 applications were acquired. The Advisory Board chose 41 of the best projects from the whole of Slovakia. The three winning projects obtained, besides financial support, educational training organized by the Children of Slovakia Foundation. Think Big was opened as an all European initiative of Telefónica O2 Group.

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People

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