

Annual Report 2009

ENGLISH SUMMARY



Year 2009 – new partners, programs and experiences

The 2009 brought for us many new challenges and opportunities. The most important among them were establishment of the Living Energy Fund in cooperation with the ZSE Energia a.s., member of the E-ON Group and an extensive planning project of the revitalization of the city park Lanice in Zvolen.

While the Living Energy Fund supports investments in the energy savings and renewable energy projects, in Zvolen we started to built upon our long term experience of revitalization of public spaces and offered an effective way of public involvement on the model case of large investment. The seminars and workshops related to the planning process attracted great interest of both experts and ordinary people which confirmed enormous potential in building confidence and partnerships in communities.

When looking at the outcomes of our programs last year, we can not leave aside numerous concrete results of projects implemented thanks to support of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and EEA Financial Mechanism, which is the key financial source of support for environmental NGOs in the country.

Also in 2009 you could meet with tens of small community projects focused on public spaces, greenways and renewed trails in Slovak National Parks that were realized with our support.

In several cities all around the country (Zilina, Kosice, Presov, Banska Bystrica) you could see or use the services of our Triximobiles – most often during various cycling events.

Thus our Foundation fulfilled its mission by linking needs and expectations of various partners, including business, public administration, NGOs and local communities. Thanks to that we have been able to support more than 100 small and bigger projects. Behind those projects you will always find the people who care about a better world.

Our profile

Ekopolis Foundation has 19 year old knowledge of management of grant programs specialized in public society democracy and environmental sustainability. We support activities of hundreds of NGOs in accordance with their actual needs, flexible and with

no unnecessary bureaucracy.

Since 1991 we have supported 2,385 projects of NGOs, municipalities, and initiatives by 10 million 214 thousand Euros.

We realize our own projects on the national and international level. We are a member of the Environmental Partnership for Sustainable Development together with foundations in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. The foundation is also a member of European Greenways Association, which is oriented on building, support and promotion of paths for motorless traffic in Europe.

In 2009 we became a member of Civilscape – an international network of NGOs from all over Europe in support of the European Landscape Convention. Since April, 2009 we have been a Fair – Trade Partner, which supports the ideas of fair business.

Our vision is an advanced civil 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 with a concern that it avoid a detriment for future generations.

In 2009 we supported 100 projects with 1,186,000 Euros.

However, a larger value is the contribution of these projects for people and our environment we have managed to beautify and revive together.

We are enjoying the opportunity to support all, who are concerned with the green around us and freedom and democracy in us.

We are pleased that we can support those who care about green spaces, a healthy environment and freedom and democracy and to contribute to the increasing responsibility of individuals for their own activities.

Step by step throughout year 2009

JANUARY

- Advisory Board of Public Spaces Program 2009 chose 5 projects, which were focused on renovation of public places from planning to realisation. Supported grantees took part in the training of participatory planning in Banská Štiavnica
- Intensive consultations to the applications followed in the 3rd

Call of Proposals of Block Grant EMVO – TUR

- the foundation received 15 projects in the amount of 83,000 Euros for Living Trails Program 2009, which is oriented on renovation of tourist trails in the national parks in Slovakia
- we opened the 4th year of People for Trees Grant Program

FEBRUARY

- In the beginning of February, the evaluators of the tourist certification program „Cyclists welcome“, met in Zvolen to evaluate last year and plan the objectives for the coming year,
- A new program, Living Energy Fund was started in cooperation with ZSE Energia. It is oriented to the support of the projects, which contribute to a utilization of the renewable energy sources
- 6 successful organisations received the support of 29,152 Euros for renovation of tourist paths in national parks in Slovakia from the Living Trails Program
- Ekopolis Foundation received 41 applications for support from Block Grant EMVO – TUR. It is twice the number in comparison to the 1st Call for Proposals
- Advisory Board approved 24 winning projects supported in 3rd year of Green Belt Program, the environmental program of Ekopolis Foundation and Slovnaft society. Municipalities, schools, civic associations, which were successful, obtained the support of 55,999 Euros.

MARCH

- Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with Skanska – general partner of People for Trees program opened the 7th year of Tree of the Year 2009 inquiry
- we received 124 applications for the support in 4th year of People for Trees program
- there were 2 planning meetings organized in Medovarce (Krupina district) and Rumanová (Nitra district) during the first week in March, meeting in Haniska near Košice was organized at the end of March
- A new film entitled „Rebirth of the wood“, was prepared by environmentalists. The film is about the bark-beetle calamity and started on a tour around Slovakia. The production and distribution were supported from the Tatra Fund of Ekopolis Foundation

APRIL

- 28 best projects were supported with 46,260 Euros from People for Trees Program of Ekopolis Foundation
- More than 900,000 Euros were provided by the Ekopolis Foundation to 15 NGOs in the 3rd Call for Proposals of Block Grant EMVO – TUR
- we acceded the challenge „We are looking after fair partners“ and gained Fair Trade Certificate
- first of 5 workshops about public spaces in urban areas was organized in Zvolen, the topic was „Water as a part of public spaces in settlements“,
- there were 37 applications received in amount of 315,500 Euros for the support of Living Energy Fund, which was created by Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with ZSE Energia

MAY

- deputies of Ekopolis Foundation took part on the conference „Europe of active citizens and sustainability“ which was organised in the course of Czech presidency of the European Union
- Trixi Mobils of Ekopolis Foundation liven up the 15th Festival of Environmental Films – Envirofilm in Banská Bystrica
- 88 trees from the accross Slovakia were nominated in Tree of the Year inquiry
- in Zaježová, a rural part of central Slovakia, an unusual educational center was opened which was supported by Block Grant EMVO – TUR; the event was introduced by Slavka Halcakova
- 1st European Conference of Implementation of European Landscape Convention was organized in the town of south Bohemia Nové Hradky, the deputies presented the programs and project of Ekopolis Foundation
- In 1st, pilot year of Living Energy Fund covered by Ekopolis Foundation, there were 8 projects supported with 56,770 Euros, the projects are directed toward utilization of the renewable energy sources
- the deputies of Ekopolis Foundation took part on the international meeting of UrbSpace Project team in Hungarian Nagykallo

JUNE

- thanks to the support of Ekopolis Foundation from Greenways program, the 11th year of the event „Cycling Day in Martin“ was

organized by Turčianska Cycling Group

- the 2nd workshop focused on public spaces entitled „Public involvement in public spaces planning and creation“ was organized in Zvolen. The lecturer was Nick Wates – an expert on community planning from Great Britain
- new cycling track, supported by the Greenway program, was opened in Sebechleby

JULY

- symbolically, at the event called „Day of the Tree“ (July, 11) in Čierny Balog, the vote about a winner of Tree of the Year 2009 inquiry was started
- we took part in Pohoda Festival 2009 in Trenčín, in the area dedicated to NGOs. We presented our activities, programs, Tree of the Year inquiry and Trixi mobilis
- a summer workshop „Croc walls“, was organized. The project was supported from Block Grant EMVO – TUR. The organiser was C. A. Sosna

AUGUST

- new public space was opened in Rumanová during the regional theatrical festival Regionfest. The project was supported in Public Spaces Program 2009
- the project of Revitalisation of public garden in Rajec was finished. It was supported from the People for Trees Program
- the summer ecological camp „Summer, hays and we“ was organized in beautiful surrounding of Biele Karpaty. It was supported from the Block Grant EMVO-TUR and organized by For Nature, C.A.

SEPTEMBER

- renewed tourist trail was opened in the valley Túfna, which was supported by the Living Trails Program. The 1st year of Túfna Valley Run was organized as along with this.
- the 3rd workshop „Local Heritage Interpretation and Public Spaces“ was organized in Zvolen
- we took part in 4th year of „Cyklofest 2009“ – an event for support of cycling trails and improvement of conditions for cyclists
- as a part of project „Bicycle Transport Development – Contribution to Improvement of Air Quality“ there were 3 events organized in Banská Bystrica and Zvolen, Rimavská Sobota and Detva

- we opened the 6th year of Public Spaces Program „More beautiful corners for neighbour meetings“
- new tourist trail in Roháčska valley was opened. The project was supported by the Living Trails Program

OCTOBER

- we took part in the conference „Turning Great Ideas into Great Public Spaces - Conference on Practical Steps to Make Great Public Spaces a Reality“ in Krakow with active participation of experts from the prestigious organization, Project for Public Spaces (USA)
- in the 1st round we received 28 applications for the 6th year of Public Spaces Program
- the winner of Tree of the Year inquiry was a poplar tree from Bratislava – Petržalka
- we took part in 3rd workshop of international project UrbSpace – Enhancing the Attractiveness and Quality of the Urban Environment in German town Erfurt
- in cooperation with general partner Slovnaft, we opened the 4th year of the Green Belt Program
- about 30 participants reaching the 2nd round of the Public Spaces Program 2010, from civic associations, informal citizens groups, schools and other organisations took part in the opening workshop in Zvolen

NOVEMBER

- we took part in the annual meeting of Civilscape members in Florence, Italy. Civilscape is a platform of European NGOs supporting European Landscape Convention. Ekopolis Foundation has been its member since June 2009
- 4th workshop entitled „Placement of public spaces in settlements – design of sustainable and successful public spaces“ was organized in Zvolen
- in the 10th year of the prestigious competition „Best Annual Report 2009“, the 2008 Annual Report of Ekopolis Foundation ranked amongst „Top 10“ and received the diploma „High Quality Annual Report“
- Ekopolis Foundation, in cooperation with TOYOTA, opened 3rd year of Living Trails Grant Program
- Greenfield Resort Martin has supported our activities since November 2009. They contribute 1 Euro for each guest using the

services in the resort in 1st round of Green Belt Program, we received 316 applications

DECEMBER

- 10 finalists of the Public Spaces Program presented their projects in Bratislava. The jury chose 5 winning project which will be planned and realized in 2010
- the wholesale firm, Metro, started up a campaign, which supports the circularization of their printed leaflets via e - mails. From every registered customer, who will make an actual offer in e-mail form, Metro will contribute 1 euro for the planting of trees in towns and villages in Slovakia. In this project Metro will cooperate with Ekopolis Foundation.
- "Smile for a Tree" is the name of a new program of Ekopolis Foundation, which was announced in partnership with SHP Harmanec Group. A pilot project will start in 2010 with greenery planting in public park Lanice in Zvolen.

Our topics

1. Sustainability and green activities

BLOCK GRANT EMVO – TUR

The goal of Block Grant EMVO – TUR is to increase the participation of environmental NGOs in the solution of the problems, which are connected with the sustainability in Slovakia.

Block Grant is financed by the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the State Budget of Slovak Republic.

In 2009 there were 3rd Call for Proposals opened. The most consulted applications were from the area of protection of the environment.

Applicants could receive funding from 20,000 to 100,000 Euros. In the 1st Call for Proposals there were 8 projects supported with 16.786 million Sk / 557,193 Euros, in the 2nd there were 11 supported projects with 27970 million. Sk / 928,434 Euros. In the 3rd Call for Proposals, Ekopolis Foundation supported 15 projects with 928,000 Euros.

PEOPLE FOR TREES PROGRAM

The 4th and last year of People for Trees Program in cooperation with Skanska SK was opened by Ekopolis Foundation in January 2009. The support of 2,600 Euros could be obtained by the NGOs, non-formal inhabitants groups, schools, villages, towns, and contributory organisations in the open competition.

The grant program started with the objective to support the improvement of the quality of environment, the care of greenery and increase of the aesthetic, functional and health value of our towns and villages. The program puts an emphasis on public participation in each phase of the project: during the planning and preparation of the project, during the realisation and also in the future (next) treatment of the greenery and renewed areas.

One part of the program is the Tree of the Year inquiry. There were 88 trees nominated and the board chose 12 finalists. Tree of the Year 2009 was a Poplar Tree from Bratislava – Petržalka.

(28 projects supported, 46,000 Euros)

GREEN BELT

In 2009 there were 24 projects supported in the 3rd year of the Green Belt Program. Slovnaft - a general partner - donated 56,000 Euros for its realization.

The goal of the program is to support creation, renovation or revival of environmentally valuable areas and paths in cooperation with NGOs, local municipalities, schools, kindergardens and 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.

The most successful projects were the projects of educational paths. Thanks to their support there were undiscovered unique natural places now open. (24 projects supported, 56,000 Euros)

2. Planning and renovation of public spaces

PUBLIC SPACES PROGRAM

The program was announced by Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with our long-term partner ČSOB – Financial Group.

Priority of the 5th year was "public spaces reviving relation-

ships". The objective was to support planning, creation and reconstruction of public spaces for interesting events, renovation of the parks, waterfronts and small squares, so that they could serve for organising of attractive cultural and sport events. The Advisory Board chose 5 projects in amount of 25,000 Euros. (5 projects supported, 25,000 Euros)

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 on an international project UrbSpace. REC Slovakia decided to accept the Leading Partner role. The goal of the program is knowledge exchange and development of planning and creation of a good urban environment. The project was supported by Central Europe Program and European Regional and Development Fund. In 2009 we realized the analytical part of the project. We worked with legislation of public spaces; analysed and defined the criteria of public space creation.

CLAIMING PUBLIC SPACES

The objective of this project is to focus the attention of the general public to urbanized landscape and environmental quality. City park Lanice in Zven is a specific example of this type of public space. We tried several methods of creating a public space with public involvement, using the experience of foreign experts and local partners.

During the first project period we realized 5 workshops for experts and local partners. Information obtained will be disseminated to other communities and partners. The project is supported from Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe and is a part of UrbSpace project.

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.

There were supported 6 projects in the Living Trails Program 2009 with 29,000 Euros.

GREENWAYS

Greenways are trails or corridors, which serve inhabitants and are used for recreation and sport, everyday transport to work or schools etc. They encourage people to exercise (walking, jogging, cycling, roller-skating, cross county skiing etc.) and help to solve conflicts between motor and motor-less traffic on everyday journeys to school, work, shopping centers, playgrounds, nature etc.

The objective of the program is planning and creating trails for active living and motor-less transport in cooperation with local partners.

In 2009 there were no devoted the grants for creation of new trails. The Ekopolis Foundation supported several cycling events and non-motorized transport in different parts of Slovakia. In March, a seminar was held on the Central European greenways in Prešov. In June 2009 the „Martin Cycling Day“ was run.

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 with support of DOEN and TOYOTA. The objective of the certification is to increase the number of facilities which are cyclist friendly and support cycle tourism in Slovakia.

The certification scheme has been inspired by examples from Germany (Bett&Bike), Austria and Switzerland and it is based on the scheme entitled „Cyklisté vítáni,“ which has already certified over 750 facilities in Czech Republic.

On February 2009, a training was conducted for new evaluators in this certificate scheme. There are 28 evaluators and a certificate with a logo of a smiling cyclist is owned by 70 tourist facilities in Slovakia.

TRIXI MOBIL

The objective of 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 comfortably takes two passengers, was started in 1997 in Berlin. Since 2007, the Ekopolis Foundation owns 5 triximobils and are the only provider in Slovakia. Last year they rode in Presov, Kosice and Zilina. You could see them at Pohoda Fest 2009, at the „Ducks on the Danube“ event and during Envirofest in Banská Bystrica.

4. Renewable energy sources

LIVING ENERGY FUND

Living Energy Fund is a result of the collaboration of ZSE Energia, Ekopolis Foundation, and customers of the company who decided to 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 into Living Energy Fund. (8 projects supported, 56,770 Euros)

5. Other activities

ACTIVE CITIZENS SUPPORT

The objective of the program is to help citizens, who assert their rights in the environment and to contribute to Slovak “active citizen society” and to avoid disappearing the vote “form below” by evaluating, decision-making, planning, and development. The support is focused on the enforcement of system changes in environmental protection and transparency in decision-making processes and implementation of sustainable development principles.

In 2009 there was supported one grant of 1,700 Euros. By the project „Town greenery rescue in Košice“ prevented Sosna, C.A. the permission of cutting the trees in Barca Park in connection with a hotel reconstruction.

Program of Active Citizens Support covered also the activity of Active Citizens Fund created by Ekopolis Foundation, which was cancelled in March 2009.

TATRA FUND

Tatra Fund was established by Ekopolis Foundation after the windstorm that damaged the Tatras on November 19, 2004. During 5 years of its existence, the fund supported 34 projects; thanks to the contributions of tens of companies and thousands of individual donors. The support of the fund was oriented to the renewal of forest areas.

In 2009 there was one project supported the Forest land owner company Bobrovec. “Renewal of forest vegetation after calamity and removal of damages after avalanche in Bobrovecká valley” project received 5,975 Euros. During this project, the tourist trails in Poľana locality were reconstructed and trees were planted in several of the calamity areas.

WATER FLOWS AND GREENERY CARE

Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with Slovak Telecom, S.C. supported two projects in Ďanová and Gbely, which were aimed on water flows and greenery care.

Project in Ďanová village, Martin district, called „Revitalisation of natural environment in the village“ revitalized the central park near the culture house, the kindergarten and municipality office. Its modification created an open space with benches for relaxing and meetings of local people and for taking place of municipal culture events.

“We take care of the trust of our partners. We offer maximum transparency to the donors. The donor can see the utilisation of every Euro in concrete program. The contents of our programs, these are not the “bubbles” but real projects of real people, who put their ideas, free time, voluntary work, and precious knowledge into the programs. The third value, which we offer, is the professionalism in the program management. The programs have not only reference value but also human face.”

*(Peter Medveď,
a director of Ekopolis Foundation)*