

*Raising Public Awareness about
Environmental Problems of Urban
Settlements in Belarus:*

Role of NGOs

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workshop on "Environmental Education and Urban Challenges "

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Issues addressed

- Non-governmental organisations in Belarus
- Activities of NGOs in Belarus towards sustainable urban development
- NGO "Ecoproject": project experience and plans for future
- Lessons learned
(+ your comments and suggestions)

NGOs in Belarus

- Distrust to NGOs from authorities (mostly) and public
- NGOs do not share information on their activities (between each other and to the public)
- Low sustainability of project results (no funding - no further activities)
- No cooperation between NGOs (other NGOs regarded as direct competitors)
- Stakeholder dialogue is not in the national culture

Activities of some NGOs concerned themselves with sustainable urban development

- **NGO "Ecoproject-partnership"**
(<http://ecoproject.org>)
 - Sustainable development on the local level and Local Agenda 21 in our life
 - "Step by step - Cooperation-Participation. Development of strategies for environmental initiatives"
 - "Raising public awareness about climate change, alternative sources of energy and energy efficiency"
 - "Local agenda 21- Pershamaiski district in Minsk"

NGOs activities in Belarus towards sustainable urban development

- NGO "Living cooperation" (www.lpf-belarus.org/)
 - Think global, act local (experience of development of Local Agenda 21)
 - Public café "Sustainable development"
 - Sustainable business

NGOs activities in Belarus towards sustainable urban development

- NGO "Ecodom"
 - "Ecologic"
 - "Eco-school" based on the Gymnasium №19 in Minsk

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

Fields of expertise:

- *sustainable urban development (including energy efficiency, responsible housing management etc, tenants' participation)*
- *water and biodiversity governance*
- *environmental education*
- *landscape planning*
- *mitigation and adaptation to climate change (including renewable energy)*
- *ecotourism*

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

Project "The city for people" (*public environmental review of General plan of city Minsk*)
(Strategic environmental assessment)

Activities:

5. Analysis of procedures of state environmental review of spatial plans;
6. Public hearings and independent environmental review of General Plan of Minsk;
7. Photo competition "Zones of environmental conflicts" (students of Belarusian State University);
8. Lectures for students of the Faculty of Architecture, the National Technical University

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

Project "The city for people"

Target groups:

5. Representatives of various NGOs
6. Concerned public
7. Environmental professionals
8. Students

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

2. Pilot public hearings: (1) public and (2) by environmental professional

Methodology:

- Discussion of the *General Plan* before presentations by experts from "Ecoproject"
- Presentations with explanations by "Ecoproject" (including clarification of terminology, graphs, maps, and relevant international experience)
- Follow-up discussions of the *General Plan*



NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

2. Pilot public hearings: (1) public and (2) by environmental professionals

Issues discussed:

- What do you know about the state of environment in the city of Minsk and its districts? What are the sources of the information
- Does the broader public has a capacity to influence the development of General Plan, if yes, how so?
- Does public involvement become more important for decision-making in cities?
- What should be done to increase public participation in decision-making in the cities?

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

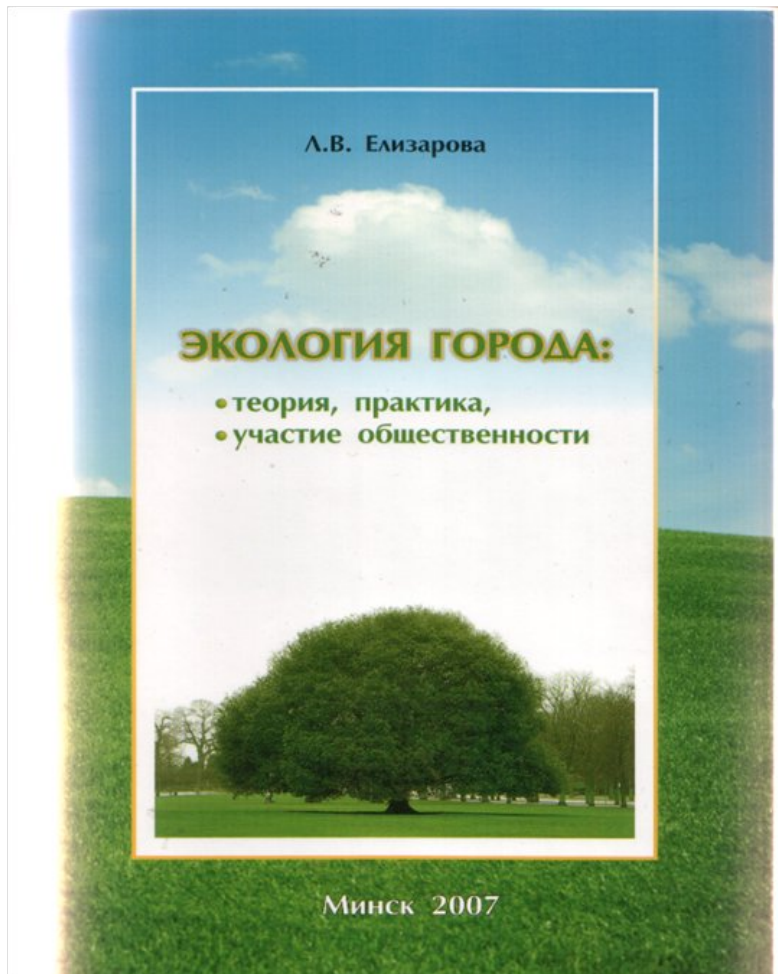
2. Pilot public hearings: (1) public and (2) by environmental professionals
1. Does public involvement become more important for decision-making in cities?

Mostly pessimistic

2. What should be done to increase public participation in decision-making in the cities?

Discussion of city development in media, publications of spatial planning info, data availability on request

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities



City's environment:
theory, practice and
public participation
(L.V. Elizarova)

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

3. Photo competition and exhibition "Zones of environmental conflicts" by students of the Belarusian State University



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NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

4. Lectures for the students of the Faculty of Architecture on environmental aspects of urban planning and opportunities for public participation



Questions for discussion:

5. *Shall the public be involved to the process of urban development?*
6. *What' should be changed in the process of urban development to make the planning info better available to the public?*
7. *What should be done to raise public interest in urban development?*



NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

“+”:

- SEA of a city development plan done for the first time in Belarus
- Demand for promotional materials on the state of city's environment from public
- Training of non-professional stakeholder groups

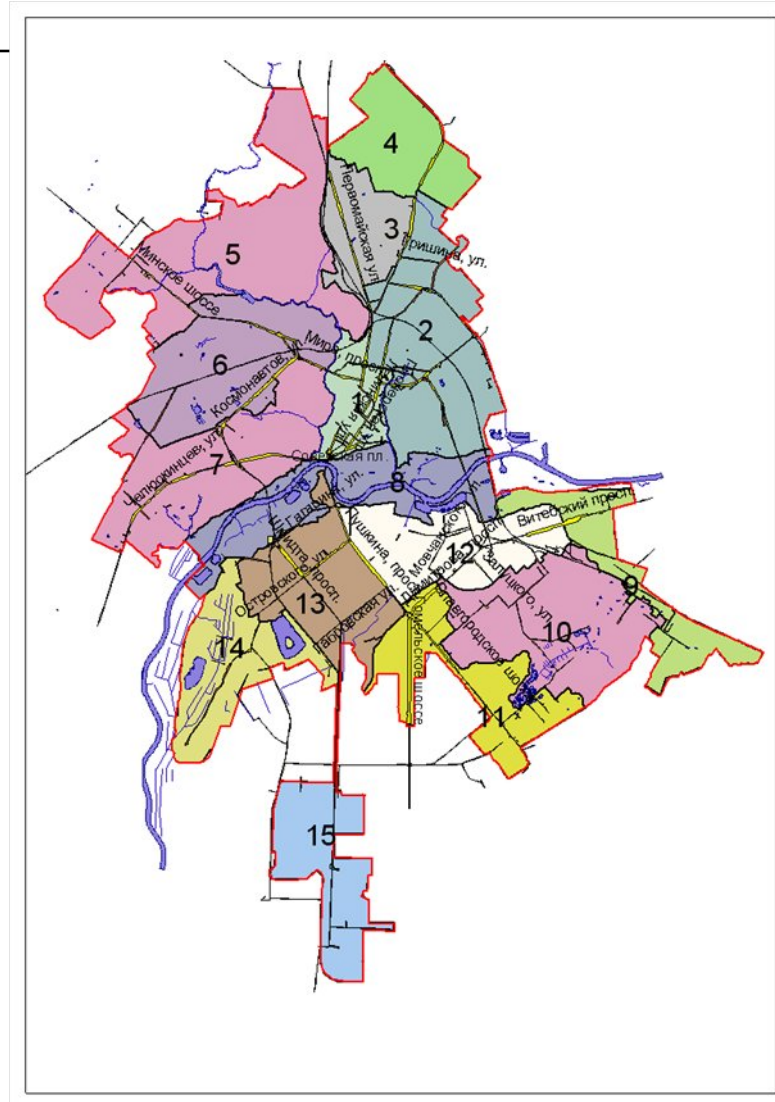
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- Some stakeholder groups did not participate
- No information in media

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

- "Capacity building and information support for stakeholder participation in sustainable urban development in the city of Mahilyow"
- 3. Development of a spatial data-base to inform decision-makers and broader public: social, economic and environmental blocks
- 5. Education and training for university and high/secondary-school students
- 7. Launching the participatory process and establishing a network of various stakeholder groups from Mahilyow city for discussion of urban problems

Urban landscapes of Mahilyow



Criteria for the assessment

1. NATURAL ASPECTS

Relief	<i>Flat</i>	1
	<i>Lightly hilly</i>	2
	<i>Hilly</i>	3
Water	<i>Dry gullies and rare streams</i>	1
	<i>Small rivers</i>	2
	<i>Large rivers and lakes</i>	3
Vegetation	<i>Small artificial plantation</i>	1
	<i>Medium artificial and/or natural plantation</i>	2
	<i>Large parks, gardens and forests</i>	3

Criteria for the assessment

2. SPATIAL CATEGORIES

Colour	<i>Monochrome</i>	1
	<i>Colour</i>	2
	<i>Multicolored</i>	3
Variety	<i>Simple</i>	1
	<i>Various</i>	2
	<i>Complex</i>	3
Balanced	<i>Unbalanced, chaotic</i>	1
	<i>Balanced</i>	2
	<i>Harmonious</i>	3

Criteria for the assessment

Mobility	<i>Motionless</i>	1
	<i>Quite</i>	2
	<i>Brisk, motion</i>	3
Lines of the planning structure	<i>Straight</i>	1
	<i>Crooked</i>	2
	<i>Wavy</i>	3

Criteria for the assessment

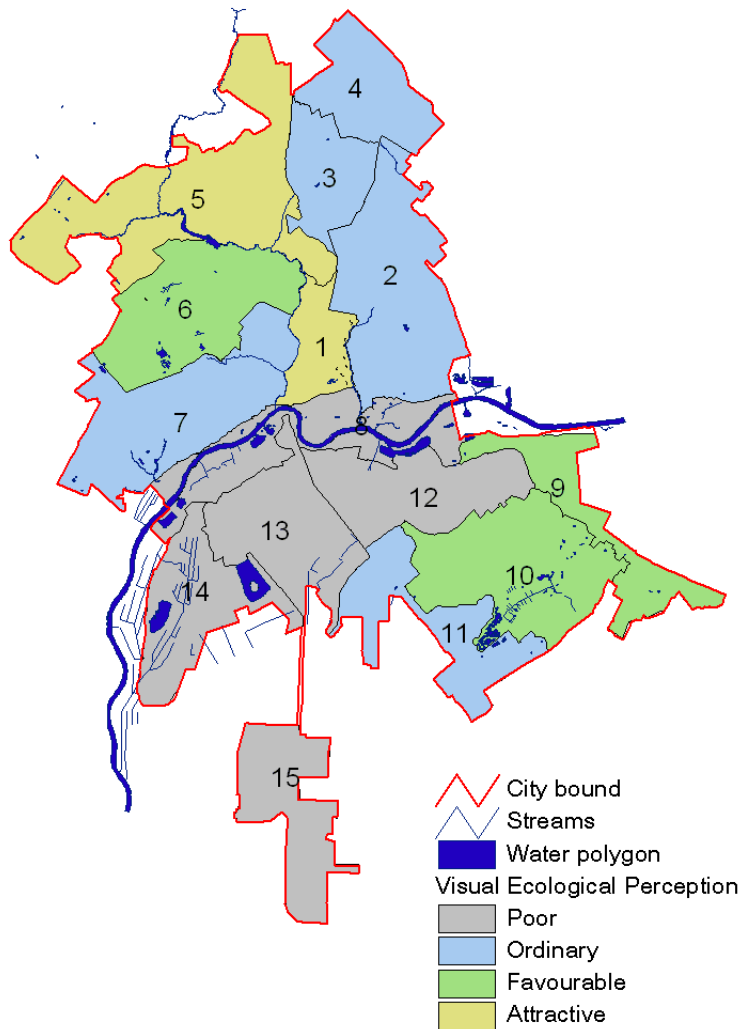
3. NOISY FEALINGS

Noise level	<i>Noisy</i>	1
	<i>Loud</i>	2
	<i>Quiet</i>	3

4. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Historical and cultural sights	<i>Absent</i>	1
	<i>Present</i>	3

Visual landscape assessment



Landscape's class	Points
Poor	1-7
Ordinary	8-18
Favourable	19-24
Attractive	25-30

Results

More than 35 % of Mahilyow is characterized by poor landscapes



- Ordinary spatial structure
- Monochromatic
- Inexpressive
- Prevailing old individual housing
- High industrial pressure

Results

30 % of the territory of Mahilyow is characterized by **ordinary** landscapes



- Variety of spatial structure
- Some cultural sights
- Monochromatic
- Unbalanced
- Huge industrial complexes

Results

Amount 20 % of the territory of Mahilyow is characterized by **favourable** landscapes



- Variety of spatial structure
- Complex
- Multicolore
- Balance
- Large parks and gardens

Results

Amount 15 % of the territory of Mahilyow is characterized as **attractive** landscapes



- Variety of spatial structure
- Cultural sights
- Multicolored
- Balance

NGO "Ecoproject": implemented projects and future activities

- Project "Academy of sustainable development" (www.worldidea.org) in cooperation with consultancy "Institute of system innovation" (www.isi.by)

Project objectives:

4. To increase public awareness
5. To invite different stakeholder groups to dialogue and exchange of experience
6. To provide professional consultation on sustainability

Lessons learned.....

- A successful project shall:
 - Involve concerned people
 - Be open to emotions, ideas, lucky hunches, and creativity
 - Include a variety of activities
 - Try various methods of dissemination
 - Look for the experience and knowledge that already exist

Thank you for your attention!