

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTISE IN BALTIC CITIES AWARD 2003

Report of the Award Committee

The Best Environmental Practise in the Baltic Cities Award is given as an honorary award to one of the UBC member Cities. The intention with this award is to encourage member cities to develop their administration and services in innovative ways for the good of the whole municipality and its citizens.

Number of applications

The UBC Commission on Environment received before the deadline applications approved for evaluation from 9 cities represented with 10 practices from 6 countries.

The applicants were: Aalborg (Dk), Cēsis (LA), Gdynia (P), Jūrmala (LA), Kaliningrad (R), Panevėžys (LT), Sopot (P), Vilnius (LT).

Key guidelines for the evaluation

The key guidelines for the evaluation have been:

1. Innovation, the practice should:
 - Demonstrate innovation in one of the themes. All innovative elements in the overall process as well as in technical implementation will be appreciated.
2. Relevancy, the practice should:
 - Deal with problems that are relevant to the city's environmental problems.
 - Be relevant from the Baltic Sea regional point of view.
3. Themes, the practice should:
 - Tackle one or more of the themes listed above. To deal with more than one theme is not a goal in itself.
 - The impact on the environmental problems faced within the theme should be described.
4. Quality, the practice should be:
 - Cost effective
 - Implemented in a good way taking into account aspects as planning and management.

Members of the Award Committee

Mr. Carl Nielsen, Director of the Technical Department, Aarhus (DK) (Chairman)

Mr. Mikko Jokinen, Head of the Environmental Office, Turku (F)

Mr. Guldbrand Skjönberg, Manager of the Board, Nacka (S)

Mrs. Inara Marana, Project Manager, Riga (LA)

and the secretary of the Committee:

Ms. Anna Granberg, UBC Environmental Project Officer

Evaluation of the Applications - Comments of the Award Committee

General comments

- the 10 applications cover a wide range of different projects concerning environmental and social practice as well as methodology:
- from specific projects like the "Environmentally friendly business fair" in Jūrmala to practices that covers the whole cities work like the "Environmental friendly city of Gdynia",
- from education projects like "Environmental education for businesses" in Kaliningrad to investment projects rebuilding a whole area like the "New use of harbour fronts" in the City of Aalborg,
- projects dealing with businesses in a very concrete way like the "Environmental business fair" in Jūrmala to the more broader participatory approach with many stakeholders involved like the "Environmental development board" in Cēsis,

- projects dealing with the different themes like “oxygen balance” in Sopot dealing with air quality issues, “Risk of Radon” in Panevėžys dealing with environmental health or the “Community School” dealing with the theme of Environmental Education and Information or “On the Stream walk – a didactic path” in Sopot dealing with the bio-diversity theme.

The difference of practice and methodology reflected by the projects implies, that the evaluation of the applications in relation to the key guidelines has been based on subjective considerations of the award committee. These considerations are in short:

Innovation

The practice should be innovative. It does not have to consist of some new technology. The innovativeness could be expressed in the methods used in the practice or the way that it tackles the environmental challenges in the city.

The overall relevancy

The practice that is presented should be relevant to the city’s environmental impact. In other words it should somehow deal with the problems that is relevant to the city. It should also be reflected in the city’s environmental plans, programs, strategies or goals. The practice should also be relevant from the Baltic Sea Point of view in other words it should be possible to transfer to other cities around the sea.

Tackling of the themes

The practice should show innovativeness and tackle environmental challenges in one or more of the different themes. It is not a goal in itself to deal with more than one of the themes.

General quality of the practice

The practice should be implemented in a good way taking into account aspects like planning and management of the practice. The practice should also be cost-effective. Which means that it should be able to be adapted by other cities that are interested to transfer the practice to their own city’s context.

All this criteria is evaluated on the basis of what the applicant has stated in their application.

Conclusion of the Award Committee

The Award committee has unanimously agreed, that the application from **the city of Cēsis, Latvia with the practice "Environmental Development Board" shall be awarded with the Best Environmental Practise in Baltic Cities Award 2003**

The reasons why the Award Committee has chosen Cēsis and the practice "Environmental Development Board - a valuable tool for the well-balanced environment in the city" are:

- The City of Cēsis has in an innovative way involved citizens and other stakeholders in the planning process and practical work for improving the bio-diversity and the green areas in the city. In this way City of Cēsis has formed the basis for a long-term participatory process with the Environmental Development Board (EDB) taking part not only in the greenery area but also influencing in policy areas like territorial planning.
- The participatory process with EDB also opens up for a wider democratic perspective in local government management in general. An issue of major importance for all cities.
- The project and establishment of the EDB has led to concrete improvements in the City, the landscape and bio-diversity has been developed for the benefit of the citizens and the wild-life, there has been binding regulations and plans for greenery and bio-diversity developed and the local community has been educated in the field.
- The practice suits very well in to the vision of the city and the focus of the environmental work of the city.
- The practice deals with challenges in the bio-diversity field but it shows also ways of getting local businesses involved in the municipal policy making.

Besides the winning project the Award Committee wants to comment favourably on the following projects illustrating the variety in the applications (in alphabetical order):

Gdynia

for using latest technology and innovative methods to involve groups that are not usually represented in environmental work for example youth.

Kaliningrad

for a successful manner of involving business people and adults in environmental education in an innovative way.

Sopot

for a project combining the education of pupils in primary and secondary school with the establishment of a informative nature path attractive for local inhabitants as well as tourists.