



Success Stories  
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## Environmental Protection as a Key Aspect of the City Development Strategy: Experience of Zaporizhia

Zaporizhia is one of the largest industrial centres in Ukraine and Eastern Europe, home to major ferrous and non-ferrous metals industry, mechanical engineering, power, chemical and construction enterprises. With these industries often a host of environmental concerns accumulate and become a cause of great concern for the local residents. Owing to cooperation between Zaporizhia City Hall and PLEDDG in supporting the city development strategy, the community of Zaporizhia has finally been heard about a poignant issue – the environment. As full-fledged participants of the strategic planning process, local residents and NGO representatives insisted that environmental aspects be considered in the continued development of the city. Following numerous discussions, the community made a strong case for their position, and environmental protection became one of the key aspects of Zaporizhia's development for the decade to come.

Zaporizhia City Council approved the City Development Strategy up to 2028 in 2017. The roadmap for the strategy's implementation was developed by the Coordination Council with the involvement of representatives of the public authorities, local residents and the business community with the expert support of PLEDDG consultants. This process involved outlining a strategic vision, directions and goals of Zaporizhia's development as well as drafting the Action Plan for Implementation of the City Development Strategy for 2018–2020. This represents the first stage of effective change and details specific actions, time frames and allocation of responsibilities and resources.

Large-scale industrial development in Zaporizhia comes hand in hand with substantial industry-induced impacts on the environment, which cause air, water and land pollution and is often detrimental to public health. The environmental challenges faced by the city are further exacerbated by the proximity of major industrial enterprises to residential neighbourhoods. With this in mind, prior to approval of the Zaporizhia City Development Strategy, a strategic environmental assessment work group prepared the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report as part of the City Development Strategy with the assistance of the relevant experts from PLEDDG. More than 50 people joined the search for effective ways to combine economic and environmental priorities. This included representatives of the public, environmental organisations, elected officials, executive committee of the city hall, business community as well as educators and scholars. Experts are confident that SEA should become an integral part of strategic planning of the development of cities, thereby ensuring the highest efficiency and speed of approval of managerial decisions that improve the environment instead of harming it.

“It is very important to get city residents involved in the strategic planning process. This can be difficult, but we managed to pull it off in Zaporizhia. Representatives of environmental organisations in particular made a case for themselves. They turned out to be knowledgeable and constructive: they not only broached poignant issues but were also open to cooperation and willing to find middle ground as well as to share responsibility for implementation of the ideas”, says **Svitlana Kruglyak, Regional Coordinator of the PLEDDG Project in Zaporizhia oblast.**

Needless to say, Zaporizhia's industry will continue to play a substantial role in the nation's economy. However, changing the paradigm of a modern economy as an element of sustainability calls for drastic changes in approaches to economic activities, sparing consumption of all sorts of resources and a search for ways to mitigate adverse environmental impacts in the course of growth.

Strategic environmental assessment is a new environmental policy in Ukraine, which is founded on a simple principle: it is better to prevent adverse environmental impacts of operations at the planning stage instead of identifying and rectifying them at the stage of implementation. Major cities with intricately structured economies stand to gain a great deal from SEA, since environmental assessment sends a good signal to investors while being positive for the state as a whole. Since Ukraine

positions itself as a country committed to common European values, environmental protection is an important part of its image and future development.

As advised by the SEA work group, the 'City of a Healthy Environment and Conservation of Resources' aspect was singled out among the strategic development aspects in the city of Zaporizhia. As part of this, stage one of the Zaporizhia City Development Strategy will see the implementation of such projects as construction of a solid domestic waste landfill, restoration and maintenance of favourable hydrological conditions and cleanliness of rivers, thermal modernisation of 60 buildings of publicly funded institutions and retrofitting the heat supply system.

“ I believe the SEA procedure to be of utmost importance. It is public and transparent. It is unlikely to be monopolised or abused as part of corrupt schemes. Notably, not just experts but also motivated community members who know the local environmental problems well get involved in the process. Strategic environmental assessment enables a systemic approach to planning at the local level.

Our city fathers dared conduct a SEA of the City Development Strategy despite the fact that the relevant law had not been passed at the time. This enabled Zaporizhia to demonstrate its modern and innovative spirit and practically single out a specific strategic direction that calls for concrete steps toward improvement of the environmental situation.

Another valuable aspect of SEA is that it involves holding public discussions and consultations, fostering a live dialogue and preparing a public report. In the upshot, we get an actual vision that the community has', says **Iryna Pirohova, Leader of the Zaporizhia Regional Organisation of the All-Ukraine Environmental League.**

A result of the SEA has been the creation of the 'Eco-Coalition of Zaporizhia' — an informal association of residents that has brought together public activists, journalists, scholars and people's representatives committed to monitoring the steps taken by the public authorities toward improving the environment. According to representatives of environmental organisations, SEA implementation became a valuable experience for them, helping them both comprehend the essence of the project and realise the need for continued training that will enable them in the future to choose independently the appropriate indicators for measuring project performance and find ways to get residents more actively involved in strategic processes in the city.

Experts note that effective public involvement is a key component of SEA success, since it is extremely important to make sure that the community, who is directly impacted by the development strategy, has been given a chance to express their opinions on its implementation. Representatives of the city's flagship enterprises also have a profound understanding of the need for improvement of the environmental situation.

“ 'Of course, strategic planning is not meant to deliver instant results, but when implemented together with SEA it proactively changes the image of the city that has shaped in Zaporizhia exclusively against the backdrop of a large number of metals industry enterprises. It gives rise to a favourable attitude toward enterprises that export their products — customers value the fact that production takes place under appropriate environmental conditions.

Zaporizhia has an extremely active community in general and those who care about the environment in particular. The public involved in SEA had a chance to appreciate their own involvement in changes taking place in the city. The business principles and standards of entrepreneurs are now gradually changing: by implementing lean technologies in their production, they demonstrate responsibility and foresight. The dialogue initiated between entrepreneurs of Zaporizhia and the rest of the community has taken the issue of the environment to a new level of social understanding.

Another favourable outcome of SEA involves debunked myths and greater public awareness about the actual state of affairs when it comes to the environment. By learning to contribute to managerial decision-making, people gradually realise that all of the initiatives proposed for implementation have a certain value and therefore deserve to be prioritised. When ideas are put on an economic track, this inspires a sense of responsibility', believes **Larysa Olenkovska, PLEDDG Project Consultant.**

Considering environmental impact is an essential component of PLEDDG's approach. Environmental considerations implemented in all strategies, programs, initiatives and action plans of the 16 Project partner cities without exception. After all, integration of an environmental policy with socio-economic development offers a way to not just stabilise the environmental situation in Ukraine but also advance to a sustainable development model. The environmental situation in Zaporizhia has been identified as the key component of the city's balanced development. Successful implementation of the planned environment renewal and preservation efforts will help achieve the overriding goal of the Zaporizhia City Development Strategy up to 2028 — to turn it into a modern European city.



The series of success stories #ChangingCities demonstrate successful examples and innovative approaches to democratic governance and local economic development in Zaporizhzhia, Vinnytsia, Poltava and Ivano-Frankivsk oblasts in Ukraine, that have resulted from the efforts of the international technical assistance project "Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance" (PLEDDG) which is being implemented by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and funded by Global Affairs Canada.

