

Carbon footprints leading into the future

Everyone seems to agree that coordinated international efforts are needed to tackle climate change.

The task now is to translate this conviction into real actions.

Countries have to develop climate change strategies, get their citizens and industries interested in energy saving clean technologies, find the necessary investments and build adequate institutional capacities. To help neighbours advance towards these goals, the EU has funded a project **Support to Kyoto Protocol Implementation (SKPI)**.

www.enpi-info.eu

Text and photos by Iryna Tuz

Kyiv – “You live as if you have the resources of not just one but two planets. Your carbon footprint is 2.33 planets and 9.58 tonnes per annum” – reads Nastia Zaretska, a ninth-grade student of a Kyiv school, on the internet after completing her first climate quiz. The website offering the quiz claims it will take five minutes to complete but it takes Nastia over half an hour to fill out the questionnaire. Why so long? Because she is using an electronic translator. “It would have been better if the quiz was in my native Ukrainian. Few people I know would be motivated enough to spend several hours with a dictionary even if they knew it would help the climate cause,” says Nastia.

The official title of this quiz is *How Big Is Your Ecological Footprint?* Plans exist to translate and adapt it for the twelve countries involved in the SKPI project. Alexei Sankovski, the project’s manager, says that such internet quizzes have become popular. You can visit the website free of charge and answer questions such as: Do you have a car? How often do you eat meat? How much do you spend on jewellery? What energy sources do you use to heat your home?

Within the framework of the project, Sankovski and his team analysed existing calculators and committed to adapt them to the needs of each partner country.

“The carbon intensity of the power grid in Ukraine differs from that of Georgia, Tajikistan or Russia,” he says. “For example, the exploitation of

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■ Alexei Sankovski.

“The problem is neither the global nor local rise of temperature but, rather, the upsetting of the climatic balance.”

the same equipment in Tajikistan is associated with less carbon emissions than in Ukraine or Russia, because in Tajikistan hydroelectric power is a key source of energy, and it is less polluting.”

Double reward

The calculator is not the only task of the project. It also helps attract investments and find partners in the field of energy conservation. There are plans to substitute conventional filament light bulbs with energy-saving ones in the schools of Kramatorsk, Horlivka and Sloviansk in the Donetsk region by this summer, the energy-saving bulbs consuming five times less power.

Why does the European Union find it profitable to support the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol in Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia? “The EU is interested in the fulfilment of the Protocol and all of the subsequent arrangements which will come after to replace it,” answers Sankovski, “The more countries participate in this process, the higher the likelihood is that the arrangements will be implemented.”

The twelve project member-countries are former Soviet republics. For this reason, they still maintain common infrastructure, engineering solutions and legal framework, even though each of them has their own particular political, economic and local nuances. The countries with major industrial potential, like Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, are more successful, while certain Asian countries, such as Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, have less human and economic resources for the fulfilment of the provisions of international agreements like the Kyoto Protocol,” says Sankovski.

All the member-countries have a legal framework, but abidance by the law is weak, especially the level of observance of laws on energy conservation and renewable energy. Sankovski believes that in an ideal world, the laws should be directly enforceable and should include the economic constituent, i.e. business incentives, supplementing the stick policy with a carrot.

The climate is changing, and so should our habits

For the past 15 years, the average temperature on the planet has gone up from 13.5° to 14.2°-14.3° Celsius. Scientists agree that this rise in temperature is our own doing. Through consultancy and support, the EU wants to attain the global purpose of not allowing the average temperature of the planet to increase by more than 2° Celsius. For this reason, the EU’s SKPI project plays the role of a technical and legal adviser for the twelve participating countries.

The problem is indeed very serious: real disasters await small island states as they may find themselves under water, even though some climate change impact might be positive, although temporary, for others. There is no doubt that global emissions should be reduced. The Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012, should be replaced by a new treaty.



■ Ecological footprint quiz.

“We just lack awareness. The internet quiz How Big Is Your Ecological Footprint gives us a good reason to think.”

“The more countries participate in this process, the higher the likelihood is that the arrangements will be implemented.”

■ Odessa port, Ukraine.



“The problem is neither the global nor local rise of temperature but, rather, the upsetting of the climatic balance,” says Alexey Kokorin, one of the project’s main experts. The SKPI project seeks to assist the twelve participating countries in negotiating an international treaty that will take over from Kyoto. “If they adhere to a new treaty, this will partially be the accomplishment of our project,” believes Sankovski.

Georgi Veremeichuk, from the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine, is of the opinion that the European Union is fully aware of the problem of global climatic change. “Not more than 2° C – this is a good policy. We are very grateful to the EU.

This project aims at raising public awareness on climate problems, on the development of national approaches and supporting institutional capacity building of the member-states.”

“We just lack awareness,” says Nastia Zaretska. “The internet quiz gives us a good reason to think.” For quite some time, Nastia has been rethinking her own habits. For example, she believes it is far better to ride a bicycle than to take an over-packed bus, but for this a shift in the culture of motorists is needed that would make it safe to ride a bicycle in the streets of a big city.

“Not more than 2° C – this is a good policy. We are very grateful to the EU.”

■ Carpathian Mountains, Ukraine.



Support to Kyoto Protocol Implementation, SKPI

Supports the fight against climate change through the extension of the flexible mechanisms of the UNFCCC/Kyoto Protocol as well as the development of appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

www.inogate.org

Participating countries

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Objective

Assists participating countries in combating climate change both by extending the use of mechanisms, such as the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation that are attached to the Kyoto Protocol, and by supporting the formulation of appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies at each country level.

Find out more

Support to Kyoto Protocol Implementation, SKPI website www.inogate.org/inogate_programme/inogate_projects/ongoing-inogate-projects/inogate_programme/inogate_projects/ongoing-inogate-projects/support-kyoto-protocol-implementation-skpi

Timeframe

2008-2011

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Budget

€ 5 million

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