



BULLETIN SPECIAL

Local Agenda 21 criteria testing

SPECIAL - DECEMBER 2005

HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

LOCAL AGENDA 21 CRITERIA TESTING

Since June of this year have been the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic (HCCZ) and the Department of the Environment (DoE) mutually working on the project called "Local Agenda 21 Criteria Testing – Pilot Samples in the CR". Since it is a very important project in which a number of the Healthy Cities and Municipalities have taken part, we prepared on this occasion a special HCCZ bulletin edition. In the following lines you will find out more about the course of the project, who took part in the project and what the existing results are. At the same time we would like to take advantage of this opportunity to thank all the Healthy Cities and Municipalities who spared no effort in order that the LA21 criteria become a respected, practical and objective tool of evaluating the quality of public administration in the Czech Republic.



Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic

The international program **Local Agenda 21** (LA21) represents a tool for implementing sustainable development at the local and regional level. It is a process that improves the quality of life in all its aspects by means of improvement in administration of public affairs, strategic planning and management and involving the public in the whole process. The level of LA21 realisation, however, varies to a large extent and it is necessary to determine clear criteria that enable the cities, municipalities and regions an objective evaluation of what had been achieved in this field as well as mutual comparison of the results of their efforts. These criteria proving the quality of LA21 realised can be also employed as a supportive means for EU grant applications and applications for support from selected subsidy titles of individual departments or regions.

The set of 21 criteria and their indicators that measure the quality of LA21 advancement in cities and municipalities, originated last year on the grounds of the Work Group for



The third information seminar to the LA21 in Plzen was also a great success

LA21 at the Governmental Board for Sustainable Development (GBSD). After having discussed the set within the GBSD at the beginning of the year 2005, a decision was made that until the end of the same year, their testing in the real environment of cities and municipalities shall take place.

Project targets "LA21 Criteria Testing"

The main target of the project was to verify the proposed set of criteria in real environment of cities and municipalities and to modify it to the form of a transparent tool that enables objective measurement of the quality of local government from the point of view of management and communication processes.

The LA21 criteria and their indicators evaluate the methods of implementation of sustainable development principles on the local level and what an active role the authority plays in the process. The LA21 is a long-term process that must be monitored effectively and organised into a transparent system. The official **LA21 Database** was created for this purpose in collaboration of the Work Group for LA21 members.

Kopřivnice

"I mostly appreciate the fact that the work executed during the realisation of the Healthy City and LA21 projects is now really visible", reflects David Monsport, the HCP and LA21 coordinator in the Healthy City of Kopřivnice. "In the first place I mean the possibility to find out all information on the internet, i.e. in a very comfortable, easy and well arranged way. Nowadays I can refer each person interested in further information about our activities to the web site where he/she will find everything necessary – photographs, articles from newspapers in a digital form and other materials. I also hope that now it will be far easier to establish further contacts with potential partners, since I would have a proof that we have made great progress and that there are concrete results to be seen behind us. After all it makes a good impression when you can show that you made certain progress and make comparison with other cities and municipalities", describes David Monsport. "Participation in the project also motivated us to create the Healthy City Committee that is one of the criteria for admittance to the category "C" of the Local Agenda 21. It is not yet in its final form and will require fine-tuning of a number of technical details, but it already has set the main task: to supervise the HCP realisation", concludes the Kopřivnice coordinator.

Hodonín

Martina Pilková, Hodonín HCP and La21 coordinator appreciates mostly the systematicness of the LA21 process, which is what she expects from the whole project. "I believe that from now on the coordinator's work will be much better arranged for both the other colleagues and the municipal political representatives. When somebody asks what the LA21 and the coordinator's position actually means, he/she can refer the person to the relevant pages providing all information needed. The database will also unveil various gaps and backlogs in the LA21 fulfilment as it will be clear as far as the things already completed and most importantly still to be done are concerned. Work should also become more efficient than it used to be" concludes Martina Pilková.

Chrudim

Šárka Trunečková, HCP and LA21 coordinator of the Healthy City of Chrudim follows her colleague. "I am glad that this



Educational activities are also a part of the LA21 processes in Chrudim. These activities build a positive relationship to their town even in case of the smallest ones.

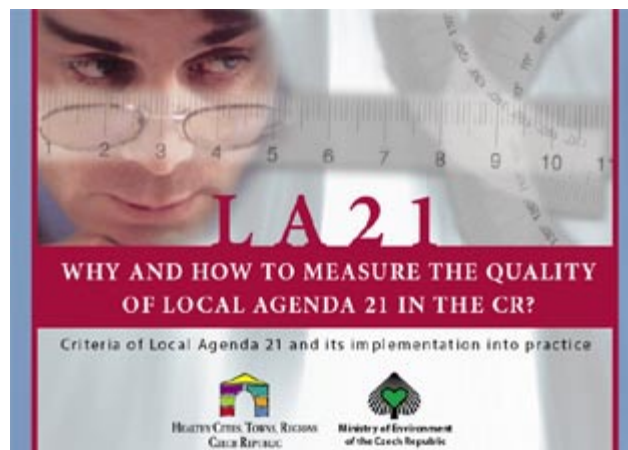
project has been realised and that we could try out in practice the way the LA21 Database functions and what practical it would bring to us, even though a lot of stress and work was attached to

the task. The main contribution nowadays is that we are able to monitor the current state of LA21 realisation and that we know our weaknesses and where we on the other hand belong among the "plodders". Similarly as her colleague of Vsetín she appreciates the assembly of various materials and information in one place and their consequent use e.g. during negotiations at the city board of representatives. "The LA21 criteria will also help us in other direction, though – in applications for external resources in a form of grants we can very easily prove today that Local Agenda 21 is not mere proclamation or ad hoc activity. As a matter of fact it is enough to refer to the Database web site and responsible official is able to check everything at the official information source – a lot of work is therefore saved", appreciates the experienced Chrudim coordinator.

"Practical Aids"

The pilot cities and municipalities that participated in the LA21 Criteria testing were also furnished with practical aids that serve not only as a methodical and information support for fulfilling the set of criteria and work with the LA21 Database, but also as a broader education and popularization of the LA21 processes.

The manual for monitoring the LA21 Criteria serves the cities, municipalities and regions as a well arranged procedure for monitoring the LA21 criteria and their adding to the official



Information leaflet to the LA21 Criteria was one of the practical outputs of the whole project.

LA21 Database. The Manual is intended most of all for local government representatives that plays a vital role in the LA21 process.

Information leaflet to the LA21 Criteria that has a form of a "puzzle" of several pages represents an easy and transparent material whose aim is to familiarise briefly the interested persons with LA21 issue and with the set of criteria and to "entice" them to LA21 Database filling. The leaflets are broadly distributed from the part of HCCZ and DoE, interested parties may obtain it in electronic form at <http://nszm.internet.cz/cb21/asp/ibrana.asp?id=12367>.

A part of the informational public education, focused on the LA21 issue and LA21 Criteria was also a **series of three information seminars** that took place within the framework

of the project in regional cities of Jihlava, Zlín and Plzeň. The seminars were focused mostly on familiarisation of participants with the set of LA21 Criteria, the importance of their monitoring and methods of filling the LA21 Database. The seminars were attended by **more than 70** participants, and especially in Plzeň the event met with a very warm reception.

What was a success and what shall be next?

During the testing a number of changes and modifications to the individual criteria took place, certain changes to the database were realised, too. However, the testing process does not end by this and another steps are being prepared – especially the official approval of the set of criteria by the Governmental Board for Sustainable Development.



The criteria testing fulfilled the expectations put in it before its beginning. The result of several months of collaboration is the **innovated set of LA21 criteria, new version of Manual for LA21 Criteria Monitoring** as well as a functional **LA21 Database**. The HCCZ prepares a digital form of information about the whole project and its updated outputs (Manual, LA21 Criteria, etc.) in a form of CD-ROM. A special CD-ROM shall be a part of the Modern Municipality magazine that shall be published at the beginning of the year 2006. The approval of the set of LA21 criteria by the Governmental Committee for Sustainable Development should be a culmination of the more than two-year long work of the Work Group for LA21. The set may then be used as an **official measure of local government quality** and supplement thus the European Common Indicators already used. The ECI as indicators monitoring the state and outputs of applying the sustainable development on the local level are thus supplemented by the LA21 Criteria that focus more on the process control and communication not only in cities and municipalities, but

also in regions. The HCCZ under the support from the part of the Czech Ministry of Interior at the same time modified the observed set of criteria for the regional level and tested it on two regions – the **Healthy Region of Vysočina** and the **Healthy Region of Zlín**.

The project of criteria testing was also presented by the representative of Department of Environment, Ing. Arch. Marie Petrová at the end of September in Swiss Zurich, where the first **LA21 Round Table** took place under the auspices of ICLEI (Local governments for sustainability). The project outputs shall be presented at another meeting that shall be held next year (2006).

The just-ended **HCCZ General Meeting** also voted for a change in **HCCZ League** (an official chart of member cities and municipalities within the scope of the association, in which the cities are ranked and evaluated according to their activity, quality of public administration processes and achieved results on basis of the rules of the following programmes). The measuring of HCCZ member quality will be based on two pillars, comprising the basis of the Healthy City project. The first of these is the international project of the World Health Organisation "**Health 21**", the other one is the international program **Local Agenda 21** under the auspices of the UN.

As an appreciation of long-term efforts in the field of promotion and LA21 support and especially for its exercise in practice and connection with quality of the public administration, HCCZ was nominated in November this year by the Czech Ministry of Interior for the **UN prize** for quality in public administration. The United Nations prize is awarded since the year 2003 in several categories. The awards are announced always on the 23. June at **Public Administration Day**.

Practical recommendation as a conclusion

All types of documentation required for documenting the activities in progress within the scope of LA21 are currently known. Hereby, we would like to invite the cities, municipalities and regions that intend to participate in activities of monitoring the LA21 Criteria in the years to come to keep in mind now the continuous assembly of required materials (photo documentation, press releases, etc.) that are an integral part of LA21 process evaluation in given municipality.

CONTACT

Healthy Cities CZ, Srobarova 48, 100 42 Prague 10, Czech Republic
T: +420 602 500639 | E: paha@nszm.cz | W: www.nszm.cz

Petr Svec, National Coordinator of the Healthy Cities Project
(The photographs were provided by the archives of HCCZ member cities, municipalities and regions.)