



Together  
Foundation

# Best Practices Database

Subscriber: Vervoorn, IHS

Subscription Expires: 31-DEC-09



## Ciechanow - Sustainable Town

*Poland*

Best Practice

New for 2002

### Categories:

#### Social Services:

- education
- health and welfare
- public safety
- recreation

#### Environmental Management:

- ecological sustainability
- environmental health
- environmental remediation
- environmentally sound technologies
- monitoring and control
- pollution reduction
- resource management
- urban greening

#### Infrastructure, Communications, Transportation:

- energy use, conservation and production
- safe water provision
- sanitation
- transportation and mobility
- waste-management and treatment

**Level of Activity:** City/Town

**Ecosystem:** Continental

### Summary

Development of the town of Ciechanow is a very unique case in the worldwide scale. The main goal of the project was the improvement of living conditions by means of comprehensive sustainable development of the town. We defined a sustainable town as a town having well developed economic and social sector, unpolluted environment, a town taking care of both health and intellectual, inward development of its inhabitants and visitors. Our detailed objectives were: improvement of drinking water quality, Lydynia river water and ground water quality, air quality, land surface protection, improvement of health, physical culture and intellectual, inward development of people, improvement of likeness of the town and ecological education especially in the field of EU compliance.

We've achieved significant improvements in the field of environment (quality of drinking water, air, Lydynia river water and solid waste disposal and management). We've created perfect conditions for people to increase their physical culture, recreation possibilities, intellectual, inward development and state of health. Living conditions of disabled people have been significantly improved. Town likeness

has been positively changed.

Institutions, organisations, business have been trained on ecology and EU standards and funds in the field of environment and ecology. We created conditions for development of high schools (4 schools have been created). Safety of the town has been improved. Sustainable development and ecological issues have been included into the town development strategy as a selected integral chapter of the document. Our achievements have been awarded by international organisations: UNICEF, The European Cities and Towns Campaign, Regional Environmental Centre (REC) and European Commission.

It is important to emphasise the importance of partnership of stakeholders for town sustainability. Priorities were set taking into consideration opinions of experts, offices, private enterprises, NGOs, social institutions and citizens (questionnaires). Ecological issues are very important during the location of new industrial investments. For example a new investor Delitissue (Italy) obtained tax relieves and it will build a part of sewage system not only for their own purposes but also for municipal usage. Co-operation between local authorities and business in the field of sustainability is co-ordinated by the Mazovian Chamber of Commerce.

## **Narrative**

### SITUATION BEFORE THE INITIATIVE BEGAN

In 1975 the population of the town was ~24,000 and was elevated to become the capital of a province (voivodship). During the next 14 years Ciechanow doubled its population in consequence of rapid industrialisation and immigration of people from neighbouring villages. Unfortunately at the same time there was a serious economic crisis in Poland. Thus, the industrialisation and population growth was not followed by infrastructural investments, communal and ecological investments and social sphere development. Living conditions in the town became very arduous.

### ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES

The main priority of the project was improvement of living conditions in the town by means of comprehensive sustainable development of the town. We defined a sustainable town as a town having well-developed both economic and social sector, unpolluted environment, a town taking care of both health and intellectual, inward development of its inhabitants and visitors according to Agenda 21 and Rio Earth Summit Declaration provisions. Our detailed objectives were: improvement of drinking water quality, Lydynia river water and ground water quality, air quality, land surface protection, improvement of health, physical culture and intellectual, inward development of people, improvement of likeness of the town and ecological education especially in the field of EU compliance, improvement of safety in the town.

Priorities were established by the Local Co-ordination Team. The Head of the Team was the Deputy Mayor. Members of the Team consist of the representatives of the Town Office, Mazovian Public Health Consortium, Voivodship Office, Voivodship Hospital, Police, Municipal Enterprises, Local Sanitary-Epidemiological Station. Citizens were involved in the process of priority setting by filling in a detailed questionnaire regarding useful and useless initiatives. They also evaluated all sectors (economy, social sector, education, traffic, town likeness, etc). Particular stages of the project were implemented by the above mentioned institutions with financial support from the state budget, National Fund of Environmental Protection and Water Management, IFIs (World Bank, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development - credits) and PHARE fund (grant).

While establishing priorities of the initiative, the Local Co-ordination Team took into consideration the following aspects: provisions of Agenda 21 and Rio Declaration, Polish and European environmental standards, specific local conditions.

## FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objectives were established by the Local Co-ordination Team.

Our detailed objectives were:

- improvement of drinking water quality,
- improvement of Lydynia river water,
- protection of ground water,
- improvement of air quality,
- land surface protection,
- improvement of health of inhabitants,
- improvement of physical culture of inhabitants
- creation of good conditions for intellectual, inward development of people,
- improvement of likeness of the town
- improvement of ecological education especially in the field of EU compliance,
- improvement of safety in the town.

## MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES

Mobilisation of financial resources in so-called emerging economies is a very challenging task. Most of the financial resources were derived from the town's budget. Additional funding was got from national funds for environmental protection, state budget grants, municipal securities (bonds), PHARE fund, IFIs (the World Bank, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development - credits) and even commercial banks. Authorities of the town pledged the Town-hall as a security of one of the credits. Part of the resources for new residential buildings were derived from private means.

Mobilisation of technical and human resources is not so difficult a task, provided that financial resources are sufficient and that we know where and how can we find the best people. Different parts of the project were prepared with collaboration of the best Polish and foreign consultants and experts. For example, one of the lecturers during seminars on European pre-accession and structural funds was Deputy Minister of Environment responsible for negotiations with EU.

## PROCESS

One of biggest problems was low public awareness of ecological issues and sustainable development. Bad behavioural habits had become very deep-rooted.

Another problem was low financial resources. The town had implemented several expensive initiatives. We gained financial resources not only from the town budget but also from national funds, state budget grants, municipal securities, PHARE fund, IFIs (the World Bank) and even commercial banks. Authorities of the town pledged the Town-hall as a surety of one of the credits!

In general, most of financial and organisational problems are a result of the fact that Poland is still in the so-called emerging economy. Strategic planning in Poland is much more difficult than, for example, in the EU or the US because of indefinableness of many important factors, such as: date and conditions of EU accession, final administrative partition of the country for European NUTS-2 statistic units system (will Ciechanow be in the same unit together with Warsaw or it will not. It is important because structural funds are allocated taking into consideration the GDP of the regions), share of taxes assigned to municipalities or credit policy of the country (very changeable central bank rate).

Public participation in decision making process is closely connected with the preparation of the "Ciechanow - Town Of Health" programme (Local Co-ordination Team) which was the very first stage of our project. The Head of the Local Co-ordination Team was the Deputy Mayor. Members of the Team consisted of the representatives of the Town Office, Mazovian Public Health Consortium, Voivodship Office, Voivodship Hospital, Police, Municipal Enterprises, Local Sanitary-Epidemiological Station. Meetings of the Team were organised monthly. Sometimes meetings were open also for political parties and town aldermen. Members of the team discussed all the issues in their circles and reported opinions and particular propositions to the team as well as the development

strategy, which is a part of the project was prepared with public participation. Annual reports of the Team are adopted by the Town Council.

During the next stages of the project 3 types of questionnaires were prepared : for individuals, for institutions/organisations/offices and for businesses. Questions included suggestions on initiatives that the municipality should do, what are the most important problems. The questionnaire also requested for an evaluation of existing investments and to evaluate the state of particular sectors. There were also questions on future development and what will be the best for the town. Almost 300 filled the questionnaires. The questionnaires were used also to evaluate particular elements of the project.

## RESULTS ACHIEVED

- new wastewater treatment plant (mechanical-biological, activated sludge, flow of 15,000 m<sup>3</sup> per day, total pollution reduction: over 95%, thrice decreased phosphates concentration and twice decreased total phosphorus in the water of Lydynia river). River quality class of Lydynia river was upgraded from classless till third class);
- new landfill site with geo-membrane (area of 12 ha, area of a basin 3.5 ha with geo-membrane and pipe draining. Leachate is pre-treated and sprinkled. Wastes are separated.);
- modernised water treatment plant;
- liquidation of 48 local coal-fired boiler houses (decrease of low-emission level) and building of central heat-generating plant and heat distributing network. Heating Enterprise signed the Cleaner Production Declaration;
- implementation of selective waste collection (segregation of glass implemented, other materials i.e. metals, paper, PETs - in progress);
- new sports complex including multifunctional sports hall and indoor swimming-pool;
- 5 new, energy-saving communal buildings equipped with facilities for the disabled;
- new primary school (900 children) with full-sized sports hall, soccer field, other sports equipment and sports-specialised standards at newly-built housing estate;
- new 2 cars for police, toxic substances identification equipment for fire service, establishment of routes for transportation of dangerous substances;
- establishing of the Mazovian Public Health Consortium which received the World Bank grant for medical service reform in Ciechanow. Ciechanow Voivodship Hospital was awarded by UNICEF's "Children Friendly Hospital Award";
- new square with St. Peter's Monument named after the patron of the town. The square became a favourite meeting place for residents;
- publication of annual "Literary Fascicles of Ciechanow" promoting local writers and poets. Third edition has been published in 2001. The publication is financed by the Town Office;
- integration of sustainable development and ecological issues into the town development strategy as a selected integral chapter of the document and integration of environmental issues into all sectoral policies. Most of the respondents to the questionnaire identified sustainable development as the most appropriate direction for the town's future;
- Realisation, with financial support of PHARE fund, training on EU pre-accession and structural funds in the field of environmental protection. Training of officials, businessmen, students (total number of trained persons: 60);
- 1999 - Certificate of distinction awarded by The European Cities and Towns Campaign for having achieved significant progress in the development and implementation of a long term action plan towards sustainability signed by the President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions Mr. Valery Giscard d'Estaing;
- 2001 - Regional Environmental Centre (REC) and European Commission awarded Ciechanow the Sectoral Diploma in the field of Integration in the competition: "City Towards European Union Compliance Award 3I's - Implementation, Integration, Information and Environmental Education";
- Broad partnerships of all stakeholders for town sustainability. Priorities were set taking into consideration opinions of experts, offices, private enterprises, NGOs, social institutions and citizens (questionnaires). The programme is accepted by all political options, mostly those of citizens because the most important purpose of our programme is sustainable improvement of quality of life, physical and intellectual condition and it has a very universal value.

It is very important to emphasise participation of women during preparation and implementation of the project. In the phase of preparation of the first programme "Ciechanow - Healthy Town". Mrs Fetlinska, Director of the Mazovian Centre of Public Health and Mrs Zywiecka, Director of the Promotion Department at the Town Office were the most important persons of the preparatory team. Other women were members of the Local Co-ordination Team during the phase of implementation.

## SUSTAINABILITY

There are no serious problems with financial sustainability of the project. A great part of the loans have been repaid. The number of economic units in the town have been increasing each year since 1990. It has had an impact on collected taxes which have increased. Particular elements of the projects are, in the major part, financially sustainable.

According to the mission of the Town Development Strategy, a sustainable town should also care for intellectual, cultural and inner development of people. Ciechanow has very vital circle of literary men. As a part of the project, the town finances publication and promotion of annual "Literary Fascicles of Ciechanow". "Fascicles" give an opportunity for local writers and poets to be better known in Ciechanow region and Poland. Annual promotional events of the "Fascicles" are organised where citizens have an opportunity to meet writers and poets, to talk, to listen to the authors who can meet their intellectual needs. Nowadays the publication is well known in Poland and promoted by the President of the Association of Polish Writers. "Literary Fascicles of Ciechanow" is a tool of dissemination and preservation of the cultural heritage of the town.

Environmental sustainability:

Average annual concentrations of total amount of air pollutants in our town (mg/m<sup>3</sup>)

Year SO<sub>2</sub> NO<sub>x</sub> PM<sub>10</sub> Lead

1994 7.8 16.7 81.6 -

2001 3.4 14.9 38.4 <0.005

Total waste generated per year:

- 1994: 320 kg/year/person

- 2001: 270 kg/year/person

Average annual parameters for the drinking water:

Parameter 1994 2001 Unit of measurement

pH 7.56 7.56 mg/dm<sup>3</sup>

Ammonium 0.176 0.03 mg N/dm<sup>3</sup>

E. Coli 0 0 in 100 ml of water

Coliform bacteria 0 0 in 100 ml of water

Iron 0.275 0.135 Mg Fe/dm<sup>3</sup>

Wastewater treatment parameters:

Parameter	Concentration		Minimum % of reduction	
	1994	2001	1994	2001
-	1994	2001	1994	2001
BOD <sub>5</sub>	249	8.9	23.6	98.8
Suspended solids	221	15.6	56.9	97.0
Total phosphorus	-	1.1	-	91.2

Total nitrogen	-	8.1	-	88.0
----------------	---	-----	---	------

- The aforementioned parameters shows that quality of air and water has significantly improved.
- Installation of water-metres in all communal buildings resulted in decrease of water use in spite of increase of number of water users.
- All new communal buildings are built using energy-saving technologies and old buildings are repaired in order to decrease heat loss (isolation of walls, roofs, new windows and doors).
- Implementation of selective waste collection (segregation of glass implemented, other materials i.e. metals, paper, PETs - in preparation) together with ecological education and ecological awareness raising programmes.
- There is the Jamal-Europe gas piping located in the neighbourhood of our town. A few kilometres from Ciechanow a gas-pressing installation will be located. The installation will generate an exhausted heat. We have prepared a preliminary project of use of the exhausted heat as an alternative heat source for our town.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Proper development MUST be sustainable, steady and multisectoral. Population growth and industrialisation MUST be followed by solid infrastructural, social and environmental investments. Development of our town during 1975-1994 caused the living conditions to become very arduous.
- Sustainable town, friendly town (for inhabitants and visitors) in our opinion means: strong, environment-friendly and sustainable economy, unpolluted environment, healthy people, possibility of cultural and intellectual development for all, common access to sports and recreational facilities, safety and peace, good town likeness, town friendly for inhabitants and guests, for all nationalities, races and religions. Absence of one or more of the aforementioned issues can shake town sustainability and negatively affect other issues.
- All strategies, programmes, projects should be planned and implemented and operated with public participation including inhabitants, institutions, organisations, NGOs businesses.

These lessons are universal. Agenda 21, Rio Declaration, Agenda 2000, numerous UN conventions recommend use of similar provisions. Nevertheless there are so many places on the earth where these lessons are unknown. Eight years ago Ciechanow was one of such places. We hope, that our case, our success can be a good example for others.

## TRANSFERABILITY

The case of Ciechanow is very unique, unusual but it is not the one and only. Especially in the former East Block there were some examples of centrally planned decisions which were not followed by proper strategic and financial preparations. Ciechanow used a composition of methods tested in the worldwide scale. The needs of all the people, inhabitants of each town are similar and universal. They would like to live in clean and nice environment, to have interesting jobs, to be safe and in good health, to provide their intellectual and cultural needs etc. Our project helped the people of Ciechanow to meet their needs.

It can be difficult to implement our solutions in very poor countries, without possibilities of external financing or co-financing; nevertheless it can be successfully implemented in well-developed countries or in so-called emerging economies.

We are aware that we have achieved great progress since 1994, but we are also aware that so many significant problems are still waiting for their solutions. One of the most important is waste utilisation. We are interested in thermolysis process. Representatives of the town and our experts visited thermolysis installation in France and the manufacturer of the installation. In 2001 we prepared an application for a grant from EU ISPA programme for this purpose. Unfortunately Ciechanow is not a big agglomeration preferred in ISPA programme. As a part of the Mazovian Voivodship we are also

excluded from Phare II programme.

There is the Jamal-Europe gas piping located in the neighbourhood of our town. A few kilometres from Ciechanow a gas-pressing installation will be located. The installation will generate exhausted heat. We have prepared a preliminary project for use of the exhausted heat as an alternative heat source for our town.

A very serious problem is building of by-pass road in order to decrease traffic level in the town.

In order to stimulate tourist activity and provide water reserves we plan to build an artificial retention reservoir on the river of Lydynia.

High unemployment rate is also an important problem. We have created a new economic promotion system in order to gain new Polish and foreign investors.

"Ciechanow - Sustainable Town" project will be extended and continued in the future. The town is nowadays more sustainable, friendly, safer, healthier and cleaner than it was before 1994. Ciechanow is a good example of successful implementation of provisions adopted 10 years ago in Rio de Janeiro. Hitherto existing successes gave us trust and hope, that our bold plans can be carried out.

## Key Dates

1975 - the small town of Ciechanow became the capital of the province (voivodship). Rapid industrialisation and population growth (doubled during 14 years) were not followed by social, infrastructural and environmental development. Living conditions became arduous.

1994 - creation of the "Ciechanow - Town of Health" programme. It was the first step toward sustainability of the town. The programme was extended and it evolved into present strategy.

2001 - after implementation of important infrastructural and social investments, creation of good conditions for development of high education, physical culture, intellectual culture, medical service, ecological awareness raising, living conditions in Ciechanow have been significantly improved. Our achievements have been awarded by international organisations: the European Commission, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the Regional Environmental Centre. At the beginning of 2002 Ciechanow received a special congratulation for hitherto existing achievements from the Minister of Environment

## References

1. B. Zywiecka, K. Radon: "Ciechanow Zdrowe Miasto"; 1995; 1-99 (book)
2. "Raport o stanie miasta: 1994-1998"; 1998; 1-84 (book)
3. Program Zapobiegania Wypadkom, Urazom i Zatruciom na lata 1995-2014, 1995, 1-81, book
4. [www.partnerships.stockholm.se](http://www.partnerships.stockholm.se) - summary of our achievements
5. Many publication in local and regional magazines i.e. "Mazowiecka Gospodarka", "Wspolnota", "Gazeta Samorządu Miasta".

## Contact

Dariusz Weclawski  
6 Rynek Street,  
Ciechanow PL06-400,  
Poland

Tel: (+48 23) 673 22 50  
Fax: (+48 23) 672 29 63  
E-mail: [dwum@ci.onet.pl](mailto:dwum@ci.onet.pl)  
**Type of Organization:** Local Authority

## Partners

Mazovian Centre Of Public Health  
Janina Fetlinska  
7 Zagumienna Street,  
Ciechanow PL06-400,  
Poland

Tel: (+48 23) 673 67 72  
Fax: (+48 23) 672 48 12  
**Type of Partner Support:** Financial Support

## Financial Profile

Year	Total Budget (million US\$)	Municipality of Ciechanow (Town Office and municipal enterprises) (% of the budget)	Mazovian Centre of Public Health (till 1998 Mazovian Public Health Consortium) (% of the budget)
1994	4.34	88%	12% (WB credit repaid by the state)
1995	3.23	90%	10% (WB credit repaid by the state)
1996	4.41	93%	7% (WB credit repaid by the state)
1997	8.55	61%	39% (WB credit repaid by the state)
1998	5.00	39%	61% (WB credit repaid by the state)
1999	2.51	100%	0%
2000	3.97	100%	0%
2001	4.24	100%	0%

[Main Menu](#)

[Search Database](#)

[Sponsors](#)

[To Order](#)

