



"GEO Cities" for Europe

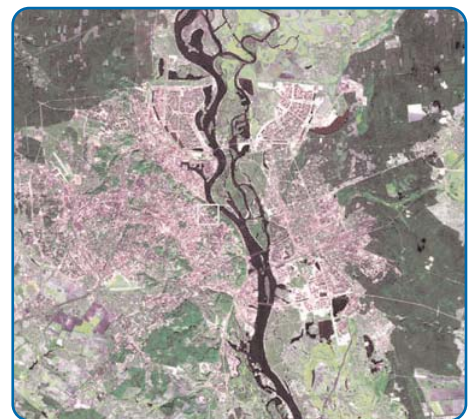
Extends the Global Environment Outlook assessment and reporting process down to the city level in Europe.

Background

The GEO-Cities initiative started in 2000 in response to calls by UNEP's Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), the Initiative for Sustainable Development in the Latin America and Caribbean region (LAC), the LAC Forum of Ministers (WSSD), and the Millennium Development Goals (Goal 7 on Environmental Sustainability). The initiative extends the Global Environment Outlook assessment and reporting process to the urban level. UNEP and UN-HABITAT have been supporting GEO Cities in several cities of LAC

After the GEO-Cities in the LAC region's success story, the capacity building side of the GEO seeks to implement a similar process at the local level in other regions.

Cities from the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region have a particular need for environmental monitoring and improvement as they are "newly independent states", and therefore are a priority area for UNEP capacity building, application of the Bali Strategic Plan and EU policies though not yet members.



Objectives

The major objectives of the GEO-Cities project are:

- 1) to establish an integrated environment assessment process that acknowledges the links between environmental conditions and human activities;
- 2) to contribute to local capacity training on integrated assessments on the state of the urban environment;
- 3) to establish a consensus on the most critical environmental problems in each city and to make it possible to formulate and implement urban strategies and plans to help cities improve urban environmental management; and
- 4) to promote the creation of networks of institutions in each city assessed.

Pilot cities

The pilot cities which have been chosen for the GEO-Cities project in Europe are: Belgrade (Serbia), Donetsk (Ukraine) and Yerevan (Armenia), each one representing one of the sub-regions mentioned above. Each GEO-Cities report is expected to be launched at the upcoming "Environment for Europe - Belgrade 2007" conference of ministers in October 2007.

GEO-Cities Partners

- > UN-Habitat
- > UNDP
- > GRID-Arendal
- > national, regional and local environmental entities
- > Regional environmental NGOs and collaborating centres (REC)

www.unep.org

United Nations Environment Programme
DEWA/GRID-Europe
Ch. des Anémones 11, CH-1219 Châtelaine
Tel: +41 22-91 78 294
Fax: +41 22-91 78 029
infogrid@grid.unep.ch



Upcoming Activities

The EECCA "pilot cities" that have been chosen for GEO-Cities in Europe already publish less comprehensive urban state of the environment reports on an irregular basis. It was therefore been decided to get the collaborators working on these SoE reports involved in the GEO-City process through a first workshop in each city, during the first half of 2007. These workshops will provide an introduction to the GEO-Cities methodology and project globally and raise interest in local communities about the process.

This methodology will not only lead to better monitoring routines and reporting, but also serve as an ideal means of communicating results locally, and to the international community. Invitations for the first workshop have been sent to members of governments (city, regional and national), interested groups and experts, in order to have the widest panel possible to set up the technical team to collaborate on the GEO-Cities report.

About GRID-Europe

UNEP/DEWA/GRID-Europe is one of UNEP's major centres for data and information management, with a unique, "value-adding" mandate in the handling of global and regional environmental data, which in turn support the environment assessment and early warning activities of UNEP and its partners. Located in the "Maison Internationale de l'Environnement" or "International Environment House" (MIE/IEH) in Geneva, GRID-Europe serves as the unique francophone centre for the global GRID network. DEWA/GRID-Europe is supported by a "Partnership Agreement" between UNEP, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and the University of Geneva.