Local Environmental and Energy Action Plans (LEAPs) for Sustainable Development, Energy Diversification and Civic Engagement in Communities in Ukraine

The U.S. Department of State’s Regional Environment, Science & Technology, and Health (ESTH) hub has partnered with the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) to bring together policy makers, businesspeople, academics and civil society leaders at municipal level in selected cities in Ukraine to develop local environmental and energy action plans (LEAPs).

**Planning tools**

Action plans are tools that can help local communities to map the current situation and organise activities in order to improve the overall state of the environment and energy use. When drafting a LEAP, the municipality first carries out a baseline assessment and identifies existing inefficiencies. As part of the planning process the municipality defines what to do and how and when to do it, and establishes indicators for monitoring and assessment. The LEAP therefore sets the course for the future development of the municipality. A well-structured LEAP can be an important stepping stone towards a broader local sustainable development plan.

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**PROJECT DURATION**  
October 2014 – March 2017

**DONORS**  
The project is funded by the U.S. Department of State

**PARTNERS AND BENEFICIARIES**  
The municipalities of Poltava, Cherkasy, Ivano-Frankivsk, Nizhyn and Fastiv

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**GROWING TRANSPARENCY**  
The drafting of LEAPs helps municipalities in Ukraine to foster civic involvement in local planning processes.
Project targets
• To integrate environmental and energy issues into local planning processes.
• To support the sustainable use and management of natural resources, including through improved energy efficiency.
• To foster civic involvement and transparency in government decision making.

LEAPs benefits for municipalities
• Complete assessment of the current environmental situation.
• Transfer of knowledge and know-how.
• Needs analysis.
• Goal setting.
• Analysis of available resources.
• Identification of measures to be taken.
• Assignment of tasks and responsibilities.
• Setting of timelines.
• Development of indicators for the monitoring and assessment of implemented measures.

Project activities
• Forging of partnerships with local municipalities.
• Assessing environmental issues and setting priorities in partner municipalities.
• Organising local workshops for the creation of a community vision.
• Developing LEAPs in partner municipalities.
• Identifying funding sources for priority projects.
• Organising a two-day national seminar at which the developed LEAPs are presented to donors, investors and representatives from other municipalities in Ukraine.

Key aims
• Decentralisation and local governance — The increased autonomy of municipalities would allow greater flexibility in applying solutions at local level.
• Energy savings — Increased energy savings would cut costs and reduce Ukraine’s dependency on energy imports.
• Improved solid waste management — Accumulated solid waste already poses a serious environmental problem, making the identification of financially viable solutions a priority.
• Education for sustainable development — Educational curricula must nurture the necessary skills and knowledge for shaping a sustainable future.

Vision for the future
The project will contribute to identifying solutions to environmental and energy challenges in Ukrainian municipalities. It will help to foster Ukraine’s potential and realise the vision of a country characterised by strong public participation in decision making, accountability and transparency.