



From Green Buildings to Green Cities

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Russia joins a global network of pilot “Eco-towns” with Tarusa (Kaluga Region) declaring itself the first OPL community

Since 2009 Russia has seen buildings certified to various ecological standards - BREEAM, LEED, DGNB and Russia's own RUSO standard. So what is next? Well as communities start to look for ways to become more sustainable a new framework has emerged - One Planet Living (OPL). Developed by Bioregional in the UK, Australia and South Africa, OPL offers a radically different approach to the other standards. We ask Guy Eames, Co-founder of the RuGBC why he is leading a pilot project in Russia and why he is so enthusiastic.

ZVT: What are the advantages of OPL over the other “Green Standards”?

GE: “**Simplicity** - OPL is much more open and flexible than BREEAM & LEED - it can be applied to a building project or a company or a whole community. Its much simpler to understand - its all about using the resources that one planet produces, even school children can understand that”.

ZVT: I see, but how does that work in practice?

“Like other standards, OPL is divided into 10 *Principles*, the building blocks for better quality and sustainable living. These were chosen by Bioregional & WWF during the construction of Bedzed, an eco-community in South London. They include:



ZVT: Impressive indeed! So if I want to apply OPL to my project or community, where do I start? Can you describe the process in Tarusa?

GE: "Its been quite intense! Here are roughly the steps we took:

Bioregional provide lots of free manuals and guides and have recently created an online platform for projects. Supported by a UK grant, UK Partner Planet 2030 Ltd and the Russian National Agency for Sustainable Development (NASD) translated much of the material.

In May 2018 an initiative group was formed, comprising of local organisations and individuals in Tarusa who are interested in speeding up the town's sustainable development process. 20 stakeholders were identified and signed up. Several meetings were held.

A group from Tarusa then visited Bedzed and Oxford in July (Oxfordshire is one of the 5 towns or regions globally which is working with the OPL framework to become a OPL community) and the Villages Nature eco-resort in Paris, to better understand the benefits of this network and system.

In September meetings were held with the town authorities and as we write a detailed action plan is being created. By the end of this year the plan is expected to have been approved by all and implementation starts"

ZVT: So how does Tarusa benefit from being the first in Russia?

GE: "Benefits are threefold - the framework is flexible, inexpensive and powerful, allowing for a cohesive, holistic strategy to be created and carried out in a measured way. Secondly it gives Tarusa the resources of networking and knowledge sharing with other OPL communities worldwide. This process started with schools and resort owners already talking with their peers. Thirdly it is recognition which Tarusa is already receiving for being first.

This status will help to speed up sustainable investment into Tarusa, improve lives and the environment. Plans look at separated waste, improving water & waste-water supply, transport issues, community involvement, eco-tourism infrastructure and much more"

ZVT: Will others follow?

Absolutely – just yesterday Kazan’s new Eco-District competition included OPL as the framework for the runner up consortium (of 120 entries). OPL is an alternative approach, ideal for those not focussing on technical solutions to buildings or communities but a deeper, more holistic approach.

Guy Eames is Co-founder of the RuGBC and Director of Planet 2030 Ltd as well as being a member of the International Advisory Council to the Moscow Dept of Natural Resources for the City’s Sustainability Strategy.