SOLUTIONS FOR INTEGRATED ADMINISTRATION OF URBAN GREEN AREAS

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Abstract
This paper aims to provide an administrative model for green spaces in any geographical area, especially in urban areas. The organizational proposed model also concerns the possibilities to develop new areas with green spaces for both recreation and leisure. Current structures leave much to be desired and, unfortunately, they do not seek to manage the green spaces on types of activities and these activities are not integrated into a unit structure to ensure coordination of operations for maintenance and expansion of these spaces.

In the study, for the administrative plan are proposed those necessary changes to create organizational structures needed to implement a coherent strategy and policy to support the development of green space.

Given the necessity of an integrated management for urban space, the model proposes solutions to eliminate functional overlaps of the various decision-making bodies by creating a unit of action, together with arrangements for its effective support. Developing effective solutions to managing green spaces for recreation and leisure becomes an obligation for the next period under conditions of increasing green areas arranged as parks and other types of green spaces and hence an increase for the cost of their administration.

On the other hand, the paper addresses the issue of integrated management for both, green areas and recreational and leisure facilities existing within the urban areas, by giving more importance and impact for these spaces within communities.

In this framework of integrated administration, it is possible to ensure modern leisure amenities in these urban green areas, and on the other hand it is possible to provide a very important prospect of additional revenues for the general budget of the community and also for future budget of planning for new green areas.

Keywords: integrated administration, managerial structures, green areas, recreation, leisure,

Clasificare JEL : M1, O1, O2,

1. Introduction

The qualitative appreciations concerning the identity of the green areas, of the quality of their arrangement and of the coherence of the system of urban green areas does not create a unitary system in terms of the space and are completely isolated from the extra territory. The proposed policies come to shape the green structure of the urban areas as it follows:

• Improving the quality of public spaces, the increase of green spaces from the surface area and shaping an identity in line with the character of the site;
• The determination of the priority areas of protecting the natural environment, and expansion of green areas;
• Measures of stimulating natural persons and companies that develop projects concerning the arrangement of some fields as green spaces;
• The organization and maintenance of the green areas as core areas for the areas identified through the process of zoning the urban space.

Urban areas have to be areas where green space is wanted, appreciated and maintained by every inhabitant. This is why we have to promote the establishment of an efficient management urban system of green areas and civic
awareness. In order to achieve this, we have to develop a specialized service or even department able to manage these activities and able to directly be involved in various partnerships from the private field.

Based on the development of an efficient organization system, we can draft and approve and action plan in the field of green areas and even establish a Social and Economic Valorisation Program of green areas. This is how we will be able to develop and implement pilot projects for arranging and using green areas. It is important to select of base of potential investors in projects of green areas arrangement. Investors will be encouraged to take part in these projects through the possibilities given by the use of these areas in partnership.

In addition, local institutions in partnership with NGOs and various institutions, donors, economic agents will be able to organize information and civil information actions and campaigns, in order to make the population aware and receptive towards urban space arrangement problems. It is even necessary to create some Advisory Councils for problems of “green” arrangement of urban areas, councils that will observe and assess the quality of actions developed by the authorities in the field. These Councils will periodically publish assessment and observation reports.

It is necessary to involve the community in the management of green spaces, in order not to develop practices for withdrawing them from the public patrimony. Citizens’ opinion has to become decisive in the matter of green spaces arrangement for children’s amusement as well as for adults and elderly amusement. By consulting the population, we will be able to draft a management plan of green spaces in the town for the next 5 years. It will also become compulsory to draft inhabitants’ civil education programs promoted in various institutions (kindergartens, schools, universities, factories etc.)

2. Needs for future development and needs for organization adaptation

At administrative level, changes will be necessary in order to create the organization structures necessary for applying the support strategy and politics of green space development. Organization reform measures at institutional level in local public services refer to:

1. Creating specific organization structures able to manage the integrated development of green spaces.
2. Providing this structure capacity to fulfil the development objectives of green areas.
3. Increasing the capacity to fulfil its duties at the level of urban arrangement. In order to achieve this it is necessary to pass the objectives and measures through the sustainability strategy for “green development” on the list of priorities.

Beyond the strengthening of the specialized operationalization structure capacity, this organization will allow to create the premises for:

- increasing the flexibility towards change;
- establishing a specialized professional and neutral service;
- simplifying administrative procedures;
- increasing the transparency level;
- decision for decentralization etc.

In order to transform current green spaces and provide the arrangement for green spaces as relaxation and amusement areas, there are two possibilities for the organization and management of this goal related investments and activities:

1. The first solution of related activities management of the type of relaxation and amusement activities as well as other related activities that can take place in the green spaces of the town, is that of externalization in order to reduce losses.
2. If one chooses to keep the related, relaxation and amusement activities, through restructuring, one can establish a company able to take over the economic management of the facilities with participations in various projects including with the private field.

Also, regarding the possibilities to integrate green areas as relaxation and amusement areas, we can mention a series of facilities that can be developed in arranged natural parks or that will be developed:

- Arranging trade spaces that sell souvenirs, toys, food products as well as arranging pavements in front of cafes with a certain theme;
- Arranging paid sport-amusement facilities like: nautical sports on rivers and lakes, swimming pools, climbing (climbing rope);
- Arranging mini-parks with a certain theme inside parks and large public gardens;
- Periodic or permanent exhibitions with sales;
- Periodic Sunday fairs etc.
3. Formulating arrangement and development policies of green areas and relaxation and leisure areas

Local authorities from urban environments have to take notice of the existing deficit of green spaces and based on a development strategy of the green space they have to develop a coherent support policy of this strategy.

The integrated arrangement policy of the urban territory will have to comprise the action principles within the plans developed within the strategy on at least 6 main directions.

The new policy regarding the green spaces from the urban environment allows to acknowledge that for the first time in the last 20 years, we need joint efforts in order to provide a better environment and living quality, because noise, polluted air, hard traffic, green environment neglecting in favour of built space, the lack of environmental and green areas management and the lack of a strategic planning can result into health problems and a lower quality of living standards.

Based on the legislation in the field, we will have to fund a developing policy of the green environment specific to the town and adapted to the concrete conditions. The main measures should focus on:

1. The sustainable protection and management of green spaces as public interest objectives of the urban environment so that these areas could be efficiently managed by means of general town planning. Thus, the town should take the measures necessary in order to avoid the damage of the green spaces in the developing areas and, implicitly, of the life quality of the inhabitants, measures leading to the maintenance and the increase of these surfaces.

2. Improving the urban environment by correlating the increase of the surfaces with green spaces arranged in report to the built surface, suggesting thus a limit of the occupying percentage of the field under 50%, a limit that should have to be imposed by the local legislation for each landlord. Based on this policy, there will be their sustainable protection and management, and also the increase of the inhabitants’ living standards. The green spaces of the strongly urbanized localities have a powerful influence on the inhabitants’ life quality.

3. The efficient management of the green spaces, based on evaluating indicators for every green space, park, planted alignment and square, becoming thus different and attractive places in frame of the developing areas of the town. One of the main directions of an efficient policy in the fields is the one of keeping and developing the biodiversity of the green spaces in the town. By arranging them, the inhabitants may have the possibility to have contact with species of the wild flora so that this interaction could lead to the increase of the awareness regarding the environmental problems. Regarding the impact on the environment, this will be positive and the green spaces register as one of the most important tools for improving the quality of the air, of the water and of the soil.

4. Project-based development represents the approaching solution of the developing policy of green spaces. The simple development of the supporting strategy of green spaces development cannot be efficient without the existence of concrete project in frame of a plan developed on the following years. Accessing funds of different environmental programmes and regional development should be a priority for the following period, considering the fact that the necessary funds cannot be covered by the town’s budget and the participation of the private environment.

Also, the increase of green spaces surfaces and the closeness of their size, per inhabitant, to the European standards will be able to be accomplished only by means of governmental support. The projects will be oriented towards: the development and modernization of the green spaces and the development of new parks, squares and planted alignments.

For that, the local authorities should lay down projects that should be selected in order to be financed.

5. Forbidding constructions on green areas based on the demand on the real estate market should become the basis of the developing policy of the green area, considering several aspects: the damage of the green spaces on the territory of the localities caused by their destruction as a consequence of the development of the economical and social activity; the necessity to improve the environmental factors and life quality by increasing the green spaces surfaces in localities, sustainably protecting and managing them; the impossibility of a corresponding environmental management in the localities, in lack of an immediate regulation and of a strategical planning in this field. Thus, the regulations should be also transposed in decisions of the Local Councils, so that the change of destination of the fields arranged like green spaces and/or regarded as such in the urbanism documentation, the reduction of their surfaces or their migration are totally forbidden, no matter the juridical system of those fields. Also, the administrative or juridical documents emitted or contracted by disrespecting the previously mentioned stipulations should be hit by an absolute nullity.

6. Establishing fines for disrespecting the regulations referring to the green spaces will have to become a priority of the local policy.

It is necessary to keep an evidence of the occupying degree of the field for different developing areas and to establish some acting priorities also reflected by the building authorizations granted in frame of these areas. Disrespecting these regulations and the building authorizations constitute a contravention and may be sanctioned with fine, for natural persons and judicial entities.
4. Stimulating the natural persons and the companies developing projects of arranging some fields as green spaces

The main problem of developing the sustainability strategy of green spaces development is related to the fact that the financing for projects development currently comes from public nature sources than from private funds.

Thus, there appears the necessity to develop certain problems of stimulating the natural persons and the judicial entities participating or developing arranging projects of certain green spaces of public utility. The stimulating programmes will be based on the following measures:

1. Offering certain investment opportunities in leisure facilities generating income for the firms participating to the financing in order to arrange the green space. By means of this measure, we may attract important sums that could addition the allocations of the local budget for green spaces and, at the same time, we may accomplish the investments needed in order to create the necessary recreation and leisure facilities. The allowed maximum level of the private investments in leisure facilities will have to be proportional of the volume of the investments allocated by that firm for the arrangement of the green space. Also, the field surface occupied by the investment in private leisure facilities will have to be proportional to the arranged green surface and the proportion of the private financial allocation from the total.

2. Reductions of local taxes and payments for the firms allocating sums for arranging green spaces. In report to the surface arrangement by means of the firm effort, this will be able to benefit from a reduction afferent to the total sum. This measure can be applied for the big companies that are present in the towns and the yearly pay big sums in the account of the local budgets.

3. Correlating the level of the built surfaces maximum accepted for an economical agent with the green space surface that is arranged by own efforts.

The companies willing to build industrial, commercial or service surfaces will have a list of built surfaces on using categories correlated to the arranged green surfaces. For example, for the case of the industrial surfaces, it may be imposed a surface of 1 sqm green area at 100 sqm built space.

Also, by the town plans, we may establish green areas as placing and surfaces. Due to the attraction generated by the arranged green spaces among the ones following an adequate position for the residential constructions, there are developing premises of certain poles of real estate development. For these areas, the new constructions may benefit from the constructive authorized surfaces proportional to the arranged green surface.

4. Establishing some prizes for the persons and companies participating to developing programmes of the green spaces. These prizes will have to be approved by the decisions of the local councils and they will have to become permanent in order to become attractive.

5. Collaboration with non-governmental associations and institutions for stimulating the physical involvement of inhabitants in arranging projects of the green spaces. By means of this collaboration system, we will essentially follow to reach the target groups interested in the development of the green space: owners, children and parents associations, militants for the environment, sport associations, etc. The results may be applied at the level of supporting and rearranging the existent spaces but also to the less important arranging projects.

6. Stimulating, through the system of the concessions, the development of some private projects of arranging the green space with leisure facilities. Currently, it is suggested the following definition for the green space: the field surface, no matter the size, placed in the public or private property of the local authority, of the units, of the institutions and of the other natural persons or judicial entities, unoccupied by the authorized constructions, meant to plant and increase the grass and wood vegetation, having as a person the providing and improving of the environmental factors and of the living conditions in the urban/rural environment, contributing to the embellishment of the town aspect of the localities.

Thus, a bigger importance is given to the private arrangements of green spaces, given the fact that the arranged green surfaces do not keep up to the surface extension of the town.

Delimiting the juridical and economical system will be necessary for the establishment of the administrating ways and of the exploiting costs. The discussed problem is about the financing sources.

The most acceptable solution of investment and management is the mixed public-private partnership with a majority public participation. The offers in the private area are generally possible from the investors in west-European countries where there is a bigger tradition in administrating some kind of projects. But we should avoid the surface sale to the private investors.

The town participation will consist in field and in the green arrangement of the area and the private participants may participate with the leisure arrangements.
5. Conclusions

Issues concerning green spaces are of two kinds, those related to quantity and those related to quality improvements in green areas. The process of a community economic development must be accompanied by the identification of the impact on the natural environment and by establishing mechanisms to control and limit harm.

Also, the local economic development should be responsible for the support of the approach of the existing environmental problems. The key issue for sustainable development of urban green spaces is the reconciliation between two human aspirations: the need for further economic and social development and environmental protection and improvement.

One of the most serious problems is the lack of civic involvement and lack of public awareness aimed at developing urban green areas. It is necessary to initiate a series of public debates, with discussions focused on the lack of green spaces and trends in urban areas to reduce them.

The lack of common programs between authorities - community - NGOs in the environmental field is accompanied by decreased ability to access locally the environment and regional development funds.

The existence of a civic consciousness and of a solid education in the population will improve the natural environment. It is noted the low level of reaction of the community and of the media to the assault of environmental factors, coupled with ignorance of environmental legislation in force, the rights, obligations and responsibilities of individuals and community groups.

6. Bibliografie


∗∗∗European Charter for sustainable cities, Aalborg 1994;