

KALININGRAD AVENUE PROJECT SUMMARY TO THE NCM NGO PROGRAMME

Applicant: Ecodefense

Project Title:

The Green Passages as Our Common Heritage and Good: Russian-Baltic-Nordic Cooperation to Protect Natural and Cultural Landscape of the Baltic Sea Region by supporting civil society and improving environmental regulation in Kaliningrad region

Project summary:

The project is to strengthen civil environmental rights through protection of an important element of our common historical, natural, and cultural landscape, the avenues, through cooperation and good practices transfer by Nordic, Baltic, Polish and Kaliningrad NGOs.

The avenues, or green corridors of Europe, are lines of trees by sides of roads and streets. They present European rich natural and cultural heritage and need to be cared now and preserved for future generations. With their aesthetic, environmental, and economic values, the tree-lined avenues form a living environment for the local communities, serve as an essential element of road infrastructure, and provide valuable ecosystem services.

Unique for Russia, in Kaliningrad region, the avenues are important and recognizable feature of region's landscape that belong to history and nature of the area. They are integral element of regional identity that connect past and present generations living on this land. Presently, Kaliningrad avenues have no legal protection and are exposed to destruction by regional authorities.

Disappearance of thousands kilometers of roadside trees brings disharmony to traditional landscape, leads to economic losses (as trees protect road surface, roadsides and embankments, provide drainage, serve as traffic landmarks and shelter belt, stop field fog and wind), losses of other ecosystem services such as soil and crop protection, underwater purification, climate protection, and biodiversity losses (as avenues provide species with migration pathways and rare habitat).

The project will study, adopt and implement skills and expertise of the Nordic countries, Baltic States, and Poland in the field of the avenues protection and regulation to help developing a legal avenue protection base as well as give Kaliningrad activists necessary cross-border support and mobilize awareness rising cultural, social, and planting initiatives. The project will strengthen cultural landscape protection and build capacity of NGOs in countries involved.

Project activities:

1. To organize study visits for partners, activists, NGO, media, municipal and competent state institutions representatives to get to know practices implemented in the field of protection, restoration and care of the tree-lined roads and streets.
2. To prepare overviews of avenues and landscape protection, maintenance and regulation implemented in the countries involved by partners and/or external experts. To publish a compiled report.
3. To set up a number of pilot avenues provided with the protected status to demonstrate their role and values.
4. To promote and monitor practical implementation of the avenues inventory, protection and proper maintenance by responsible agencies.

5. To organize a training workshop for local authorities, state agencies (road service, traffic safety, nature protection), students of related specialties, teachers and NGOs in Kaliningrad with partners and external experts.
6. To produce a guide on avenues protection and maintenance for responsible state and municipal services.
7. To run an educational school oriented campaign, including a series of seminars for teachers and events for students such as field studies and research, tree planting and contests.
8. To conduct a research analysing connections and differences between Nordic and Baltic (ex-Prussian) situations with avenues.