

Секция 5.

The world in the 21 century: Economic and ecological Issues

М.А. Ласточкин, А.С. Малышкина

УО БГЭУ (Минск)

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Social responsibility is an ethical ideology or theory that an entity, be it an organization or individual, has an obligation to act to benefit society at large. Social responsibility is a duty every individual or organization has to perform so as to maintain a balance between the economy and the ecosystem. There is always a trade-off between economic development, in the material sense, and the welfare of the society and environment. Social responsibility means sustaining the equilibrium between the two. It pertains not only to business organizations but also to everyone whose actions impact the environment. This responsibility can be passive, by avoiding engaging in socially harmful acts, or active, by performing activities that directly advance social goals.

Economic activities often impact those who are not involved in the activity. For example, a corporation manufacturing automobiles generates pollution and the cost of this pollution is borne by nearby residents. External costs (or benefits) arising from economic activities are referred to externalities. While firms of any size can create externalities, multinational corporations can use their political influence to avoid bearing responsibility for significant external costs.

Environmental responsibility includes criteria in relation to pollution prevention and resource reduction, energy conservation, hazardous substances, wastewater and solid waste, air emissions and product content restrictions.

Sustainable development of environmental policy can make firms more efficient, more effective and less exposed to risk. It may also provide marketing tools to add value to products, or improve the corporate image with the public.

Some people view corporate responsibility as a genuine effort by firms to reach out into the community and look beyond the profit-driven side of business, others are wary that firms use corporate responsibility as a PR device to gain good favor from consumers.

While direct action by consumers and investors has initiated some corporate reforms, it still remains the task for governments to set the legal boundaries for corporate behavior. Several reforms could be instituted at the national level to reduce the externalities multinational corporations impose on society and increase social well-being.

The issue of environmental responsibility plays an important role in Belarus. The environmental activity is mostly controlled by the state. The system of state bodies for environmental activity management includes: The President of the Republic Belarus, the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers, and local administration bodies. The underlying principle of administration in the sphere of nature management and environmental protection is ban/authorize. None of the construction or reconstruction projects can be implemented and financed without positive opinion of the state ecological examination body. The key economic levers in nature utilization and environmental protection are: planning and financing of environmental protection measures; preferential crediting of environmental activity; quotas for utilization of natural resources, waste disposal and emissions; collection of tax and other charges for utilization of natural resources; compensation for environmental damage in the prescribed order.

Ecological policy of Belarus, its legal base, and economic mechanisms of nature management are continuously improved. This creates prerequisites for the current and future generations of citizens in the country to implement their rights to favorable environment and ecologically safe living conditions. Environmental policy pursued by the Government provides for consistent structural reorganization of the production sphere, improvement of production technologies, including resource-saving, application of low-waste and waste-free technologies, reduction of discharges and pollutants discharged into the air, waste utilization and processing.

Environmental issues have an impact on our quality of life as well as all future generations. This kind of responsibility starts with each of us, and it is first and foremost a state of mind, willingness to take responsibility, followed by appropriate behavior.

Д.А. Лисович, А.И. Рабкевич

УО БГЭУ (МИНСК)

ECO-BUILDING: WHERE IS BELARUS?

In the course of numerous research it has been revealed that modern European spends 23 hours per day in premises, whether it is a car, a house or an office which is mainly constructed from artificial materials such as plastic, PVC and synthetic resins. But only ten out of these materials are tested on toxicity and get hygienic certificates in our country. The influence of others remains unknown. So often it is not just about how to live in such a house but even how to survive in it. In some cases it can result in real disaster which happened in Ostankino when new-built houses had to be destroyed after numerous cases of birth of children with inborn deformities. So it came down to creating eco-friendly and safe for human health environment.

Eco-building has been the main trend in the world's real estate for the past decade. The interest is determined by the fact that all the most important components of people's living such as economy, ecology, climate and health are correlated in it. Among other main reasons are creating more comfortable conditions for living, cut emissions of gases, rubbish and reduction of water pollution. In addition eco-building allows to decrease capacity on regional electric networks. In Europe and the USA eco-building is the essential part of the market. Eco-elements like "green" roofs and double-skin facades are often applied to building by large corporations. For them it is the matter of prestige, care about the quality of environment in the workplace for their employees and the economy on conditioning, heating, lighting.

What is an eco-house? It is a dwelling where non-renewable sources of energy are practically not used and on the other hand there is no harm to nature and people's health. The key elements of each eco-house are:

- Thick walls made from straw and clay;