

Polish Ecology Leader

Promoting environment-friendly solutions

In 1996 Poland's Environment, Natural Resources and Forestry Minister founded the Polish Ecology Leader Competition in response to an initiative by ecology-involved NGOs. The competition is open to producers and servicers favouring sustained development and agreeing to voluntary environmental restrictions, and local governments pursuing broadscale ecological programmes.

Since 2001 the contest is open in the following categories: Company (Producer, Servicer), Product (Technology, Product, Device), Rural Community, Urban Community, Rural-Urban Community, Community Union.

The contest is overseen by a Programme Council appointed by the Environment Minister. On the council are representatives of public institutions dealing with environment protection and environmental experts.

Polish Ecology Leader entries are judged by the following criteria: • ecological and social effects • economic effects • general (above-regional) environmental effects, • innovativeness, modernity, • universality • financing • application scope (local, national, international) • participation in management schemes (e.g. Responsibility and Concern, Cleaner Production, ISO 14001, Pollution Prevention Centres) • educational properties, public acceptance level.

Since 1996 companies and local governments have entered more than a thousand projects to the contest, many carried out in cooperation with research centres, universities and local communities, and financed from national and foreign ecology funds.

To date 76 Polish Ecology Leader titles were granted in nine editions of the contest, the 2005/2006 edition alone awarding 13 and mentioning 7 projects.

Many of the awarded projects belonged to national programmes, especially those focused on raising the role of renewable energy sources in our power economy.

This year the Environment Minister awarded a Polish Ecology Leader title to Pumped-Storage Electric Plants (Elektrownie Szczytowo-Pompowe SA) for the hydroelectric production of "green energy", in 2003 it went to the Graso company in Stargard Szczeciński for an ecological straw-fuelled boiler and the town Łapy for biomass upgrades on its heating system.

Also important is the recultivation of post-industrial areas. Among our winners here is Hydroprojekt for upgrades on former water reservoir sites.

We also award moor- and woodland recultivation projects, which are of key importance for the restoration of biological diversity in valuable natural preserves like forests and valleys. Such under-



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takings are also very instructive, providing ample occasion for interesting sojourns into the natural world. This year's winners in the field are the Kaliska Forest Inspectorate, the National Forestry Regional Directorate in Olsztyn and the Union of Parsęta Basin Towns and Communities in Karlino. Last year's laureate in this category was the Garwolin Forest Inspectorate. A quite special winner is the Syców Forest Inspectorate, which got the title for raising the genetic resources of forest eco-systems in west Poland.

Last year an award for system solutions in water economy went to the Water Economy and Recultivation Enterprise in Jastrzębie Zdrój

for a salination-reducing retention system on the River Olza. In 2003 a similar prize went to the abovementioned Hydroprojekt company for an anti-flood canal project in Opole.

We also award local governments, mainly for complex solutions in sewage and waste processing, air protection, etc., as well as for broadscale environmental projects. This year Polish Ecology Leader titles went to the towns Tychy and Słupsk, the communities Polanów and Terespol, and the Union of Karkonosze Communities. Also mentioned were the town Wagrowiec, the community Gizalki, and the town and community of Wolsztyn. Winners in earlier years include Gdańsk, Puławy, Żywiec, Łapy, Krynki, Nowa Dęba, and the Union of Działoszyn Communities.

On the eve of the competition's jubilee 10th edition it must be said that this form of encouraging corporate and local sustained development and local, regional and national-scale environmental care has proven itself very well.

The Polish Ecology Leader title is a prestigious distinction, not least because it is not accompanied by a money prize. Winners receive statuettes and may use the competition's logo. Each year more than 50 projects are sent in to the competition, which proves the high interest it arouses as an innovation-promoting and environment-friendly event helping to raise living standards for present and future generations of Poles.

The 2005/2006 awarding ceremony took place on November 7, 2006 in Warsaw's "Fabryka Trzciny" (Cane Factory) culture centre. The awards and titles were handed out by Environment Minister Jan Szyszko.

Since its outset the competition's secretariat is at the Industrial Area Ecology Institute in Katowice.

ANDRZEJ MIŁOSZEWSKI

Member, Polish Ecology Leader Programme Council,
Aide to the Main Environment Protection Inspector



Polish ecology leaders

"Poland's natural resources are quite unique, a heritage which we have preserved as one of very few countries in Europe. We boast 23 national parks, including the world-renowned Białowieża National Park, and utilize our forestland rationally in an excellent example of sustained development", Polish Environment Minister Jan Szyszko said at the November 7 Polish Ecology Leader gala in Warsaw's "Fabryka Trzciny" (Reed Factory) Art Centre.

First awarded in 1997, the prestigious Polish Economy Leader title honours especially successful efforts at raising environmental and living standards, it is also an incentive for enterprisers to pay more attention to environmental matters, among others by reducing pollution, curbing the exploitation of natural resources and cutting down energy usage.

In all 49 communities and 41 companies ran in this year's ninth Polish Ecology Leader competition. The Environment Minister granted 13 Polish Ecology Leader titles, seven participants received distinctions.

This year's Polish Ecology Leader winners are:

- The Kaliska Forest Inspectorate – for restoring forest moorland, forest trenches and forest lakes;
- The Syców Forest Inspectorate – for preserving and developing the genetic resources of forest ecosystems;
- The Chorzów Thermal-Electric Plant – for exemplary environmental solutions in combined energy production;
- The Bełchatów Brown Coal Mine – for an environment-friendly conveyor extension technology;
- Pumped Storage Electric Plants – for green energy production;



Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński's letter to the competition participants

Our country needs a clean and safe environment, it also needs environmental leaders to set positive examples for others to follow. The Polish Economy Leader competition is one of the most objective ways of singling out such leaders. Each of the projects entered in the competition is in itself an important contribution to raising environmental standards in Poland and helps raise the image of Polish economy. I wish to stress the importance for our country of all who not only strive for novatory technological and organizational solutions but also manage to achieve commercial success. Thanks to their efforts Poland has a good chance for the timely fulfilment of its EU membership obligations. The Polish Ecology Leader contest promotes environment-friendliness, helps raise environmental awareness and shape new social attitudes to ecology. It also proves that environment protection is an innovation sphere constantly in need of new, quality-raising technologies and ideas. I hope this year's winners find many followers whose successful efforts towards environmental improvement will eventually lead them to Polish Ecology Leader titles.

I congratulate the competition laureates and wish them further pursuit of better, innovative environmental solutions as a key both to commercial success and public respect.

- Hydroproject Warsaw – for recultivating degraded terrain by means of water-reservoir construction;
- ECO INSTAL, Poznań – for the CF cyclo-filter;
- The city of Tychy – za wdrożenie kompleksowego programu obniżania emisji zanieczyszczeń do atmosfery w dzielnicach obrzeżnych
- The city of Słupsk – for communal environmental projects;
- Polanów Community – for promoting environment-friendly tourism;
- Terespol Community – for environmental projects, especially in waste disposal;
- Karkonosze Community Union – for erecting the Karkonosze Waste Economy Centre.

According to Wanda Jarosz from the competition's Programme Council air pollution and toxic waste reductions, water improvement and energy saving are the most important environmental measures undertaken by local governments today. Local communities not only view ecological solutions as very advantageous but also participate in their realization. This year's Polish Ecology Leader competition also showed how much has been done in spheres like forestry, water economy and spatial management to improve the protection and sustained exploitation of natural resources. Jarosz added that special mention here should go to forestry staff, who tackle their tasks with knowledge, determination and imagination. (hk)



Pumped Storage Power Plants Co. win Polish Ecology Leader Prize



Rakowice
power station



Elektrownie Szczytowo-Pompowe SA

ul. Ogrodowa 59a, 00-876 Warszawa

Tel. (+48 22) 43 31 100, 43 31 101

Fax (+48 22) 624 25 55

e-mail: espsa@elsp.com.pl, www.elsp.com.pl

Elektrownie Szczytowo-Pompowe SA (ESP SA), a company operating pumped-storage power stations, was honoured with the title of Polish Ecology Leader in this year's edition of the competition. The company took part in the competition for the first time. ESP SA entered for the competition its hydroelectric power plants: Solina-Myczkowce, Dychów and Rakowice. They generate "green" water energy.

Solina power station

The Solina power station is a major Polish peak-load hydroelectric power station with a pumped-storage unit. Its installed capacity amounts to 200MW. It is located at Poland's highest gravity dam. Its upper reservoir is Poland's largest artificial lake. Solina is a unique facility in terms of its landscape and nature assets and flood control role. The power station's advantage is that it enables electricity generation based on the natural flow of the river San.

Dychów power station

The 90MW Dychów power station is an important facility operating in keeping with the global trend to exploit renewable energy sources to generate electricity. The power station turns water energy into environment-friendly electric energy. Modernised in the years 2002-2005, the Dychów power station is up to the European standards. Facilities installed in the power station are one of the most modern in the world. Dychów is ESP SA's show-piece when it comes to energy production from renewable sources.

Rakowice power station

The Rakowice dam is located on the river Bóbr, 167.5 kilometres from its source and 3 kilometres downstream from Lwówek Śląski in Dolnośląskie province. The Rakowice power station is another innovative project implemented by ESP SA. The topographic features of this area made it possible to direct the Bóbr to a new channel running across the Rakowice quarry. The power station and the dam are situated at a place where the new river stretch crosses the quarry working. The difference of water levels achieved through the shortening of the river course meets hydroelectric requirements. The power station has not contributed to changing the local water relations – flood hazard has not increased for lower lying areas. Additionally, the op-

eration of the Rakowice power station has a favourable impact on the local biosphere: the increased content of oxygen helps the self-purification of the river and supports plant and animal life. Electricity production in the Rakowice power station does not result in water and air pollution. All possible threats associated with the plant's operation have been eliminated thanks to the use of appropriate technical solutions. Turbine sets with additional protection against excessive acoustic disturbances and vibration have been installed in Rakowice.

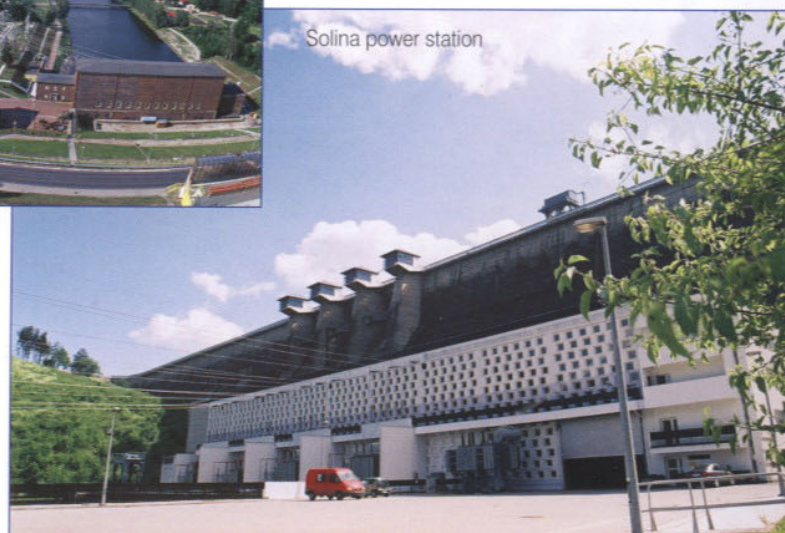
Environment-friendly company

The win of ESP SA in the Polish Ecology Leader competition provides a unique opportunity for presenting a company which occupies an important position in the Polish hydroelectric power sector. ESP SA acts in keeping with the current trends in the power generation sector to make maximum use of renewable energy sources and to minimise the impact on the environment. The company has for years worked towards environmental protection and promoted renewable sources of energy.

ESP SA is a major producer of "green energy" from water flow (400 GWh/a, or 17.5 per cent of all energy generated from water flow in Poland). The company uses modern technologies and safeguards, demonstrating that hydroelectric power generation can be environment friendly: 400,000 MWh of electricity generated from water flow means a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere by 400,000 tonnes.



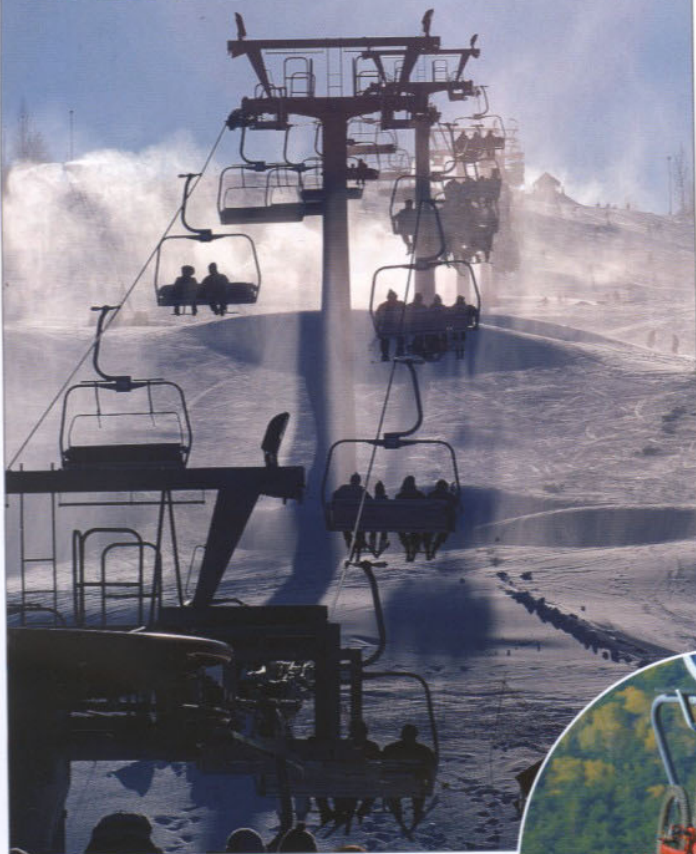
Dychów power station



Solina power station

EWA SOCHOCKA
Renewable Energy Association

Taking care of the environment



The BOT Belchatów Lignite Coal Mine Company (BOT KWB Belchatów SA) has been operating for more than 30 years delivering brown coal to the nearby BOT Belchatów Power Station SA. Throughout, the coal mine management has been consistently concerned with natural environment issues. Its accomplishments in this respect has earned it numerous awards and distinctions.

The open cast exploitation of the brown coal resources meant the exclusion from use of large forest and farming areas and in effect a degradation of the area and the environment. Throughout, BOT KWB Belchatów SA has been pursuing pro-ecological tasks to make up for the adverse effects of its operations.

To reach the lignite resources, the whole overlay had to be removed. As a result, the relief of the terrain was transformed leading to the formation of artificial hollows and hills. One of the latter consists of an outer dumping ground made up of soil originally covering the brown coal layers. BOT reclaimed this dumping ground and in effect created the largest forested ground elevation in Central Poland. It is 195 metres above the sea level high and has now been adopted for sports and tourist purposes.

Before the skiers arrived

Before the "Góra Kamieński" (Mountain Kamieński) Sports and Recreation Centre was set up on the outer dumping ground, BOT carried out thorough, extensive and labour intensive reclamation work. The hill has been ideally integrated with the landscape. After completing the process, BOT transferred ca 1500 hectares of the forests to the State Forestry Commission's Authority in Belchatów. The mine kept 14 hectares of the land for use as a skiing route and ca 42 hectares with a container situated on the slope for storing gypsum from the flue gas desulphurisation system at the nearby power station.

When huge brown coal desposits were discovered in the early 1960s near the then small town of Belchatów, hardly anyone expected that a big mining and power centre will emerge there within the next dozen of years. The decision to build one of the largest lignite mines in Europe and the largest thermal power plant on this Continent has led to a dynamic growth and development of the whole region.

With rest and recreation in mind

The "Góra Kamieński" Sports and Recreation Centre has been providing its services since 2004. Situated on the northern slope of the dumping ground, the ski-lift there has become the main attraction of the Centre. Surely, the main asset of "Góra Kamieński" is its close location (six kilometres) from the Warsaw-Katowice expressway and from Belchatów (18 kilometres). The skiers are offered a four-seat chairlift capable of carrying some two thousand people to the top each hour. The ski route itself is 800 metres long and 150 metres wide. Available, too, is a T-bar allowing down-hill ride by two shorter routes.

Situated at the foot of the slope is the bottom station with a hotel and eateries as well as a ski-rental service. Accommodation is also available in OSiR Wawrzkowizna and the Sport Hotel (run by the BOT affiliated Bestur company). Both can be reached in just a dozen of minutes by car.

Apart from skiing enthusiasts, the "Góra Kamieński" offers facilities for cyclists. BOT laid out over 40 kilometres of bicycle lanes and facilities are available for extreme cycling fans riding downhill on MTB bikes. "Góra Kamieński" also invites children and young people to enjoy themselves in a mini-entertainment park. The Centre has become a highly attractive place for active leisure throughout the whole year.



BOT KWB Belchatów SA received the following titles and distinctions for its performance in the ecological field:

- Maecenas of Polish Ecology (2002)
- Environment Friendly Company (2002, 2004-2006)
- Leader of Polish Ecology (2006)



BOT

BOT Górnictwo i Energetyka SA
Al. Piłsudskiego 12
90-051 Łódź
www.bot.pl

