
Seoul Metropolitan Government, South Korea Implementation of Local Agenda 21

Seoul started the formulation of a Local Agenda 21 (LA21) in 1995. Today, a citizen group called “The Citizens’ Committee for a Green Seoul” is taking the lead in promoting LA21 activities in cooperation with Seoul’s Chamber of Commerce (a business task force) and the city’s 25 wards (a citizen task force). In promoting actual projects, The metropolitan government extends financial support to projects led by citizen groups and NGOs through its “Invitation of Citizens’ Project Proposals”, in an effort to get citizens involved in LA21 implementation.

Meanwhile, the metropolitan government is actively reviewing LA21 and has put the first revisions into effect in March 2000. It also plans to introduce 27 indicators to evaluate the progress of LA21 in 2001.

City Profile

Located at the estuary of the Han River, which runs through the center of the Korean Peninsula, Seoul is a city with a population of 10.2 million. It has been the center of politics, economy, culture and education serving as the country’s capital since 1394. Seoul is endowed with an exceptional natural environment, surrounded by magnificent mountains. It has developed LA21 and actively implemented various relating environmental programs.

Current Situation of LA21 in Korea

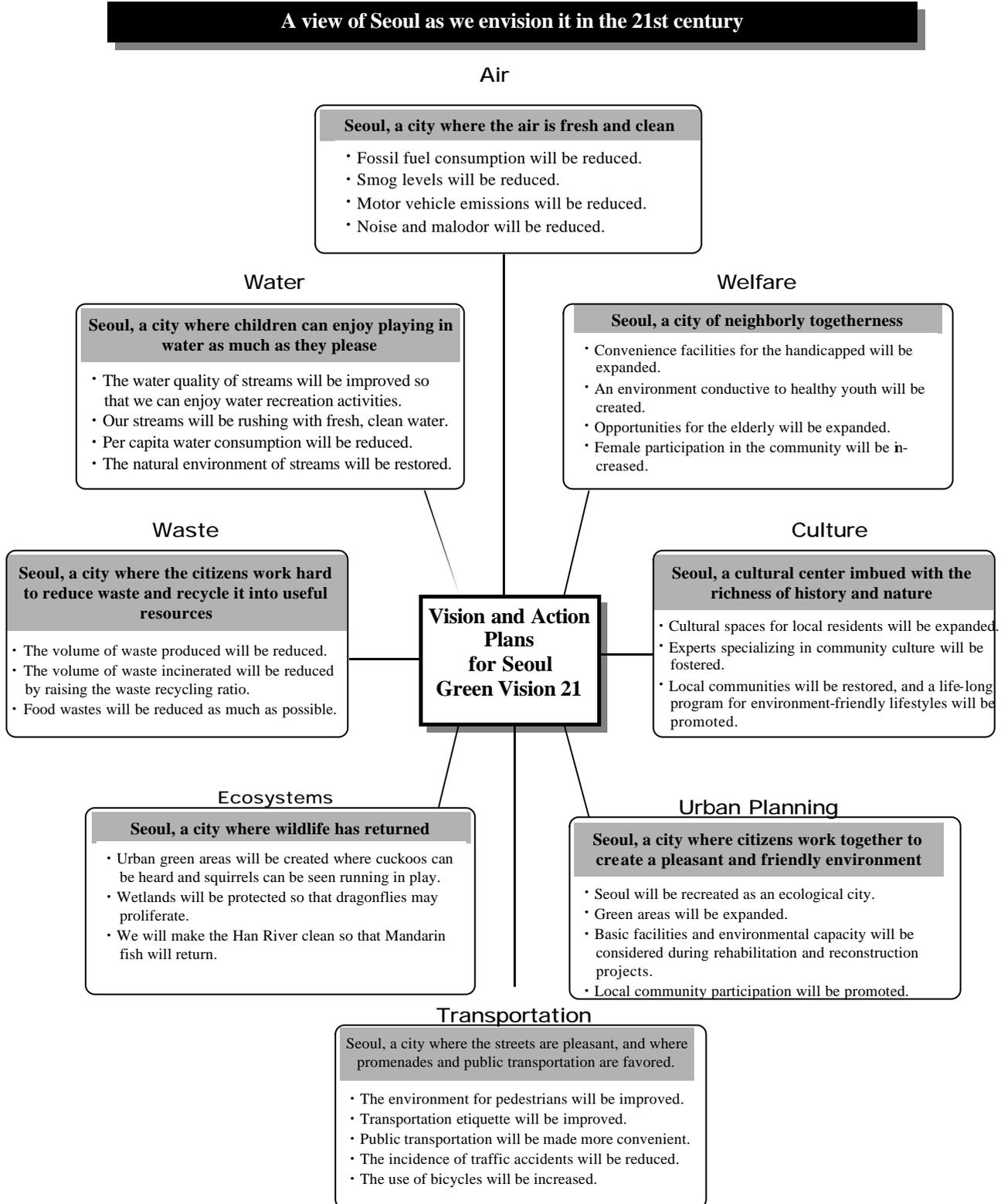
Korea has seen a substantial increase in LA 21 activities since the first direct election of municipal heads by citizens in 1995. At present, all of the 16 provinces and metropolitan cities (equivalent to Japan’s prefectures and metropolitan cities) in Korea have drawn up their LA21, and over 100 of the 232 municipalities (equivalent to Japan’s 23 wards and cities) have implemented their own LA21.

Formulation of LA21

To start the formulation of LA21, The Citizens’ Committee for a Green Seoul was established in November 1995. In May 1996, the Basic Environmental Ordinance and the Seoul Environmental Charter were enacted, defining the basic principles and directions of the “Seoul Agenda 21.” In January 1997, the “Seoul Agenda 21 Promotion Council,” comprised of roughly 200 members representing civil groups, women’s groups, experts, labor unions, businesses, and the metropolitan government, was set up to begin the actual drafting of Seoul’s LA 21. Besides having experts conducting research, the Promotion Council also organized study tours and site visits, and facilities, and carried out questionnaire surveys. The drafting proceeded through the more than one hundred meetings. To obtain feedbacks from citizens, the Promotion Council also held public hearings and workshops to explain the contents of the draft. In June 1997, the draft was finalized and adopted as the “Seoul Green Vision 21.”¹

¹ The Seoul Green Vision 21 analyses the status and problems pertaining to the eight areas of water, air, waste, transportation, urban planning, ecosystems, culture, and welfare. It then defines the future visions and objectives of each area, and set specific targets for realizing the objectives (see **Fig. 1**).

Fig. 1 Vision and Action Plans for Seoul Green Vision 21



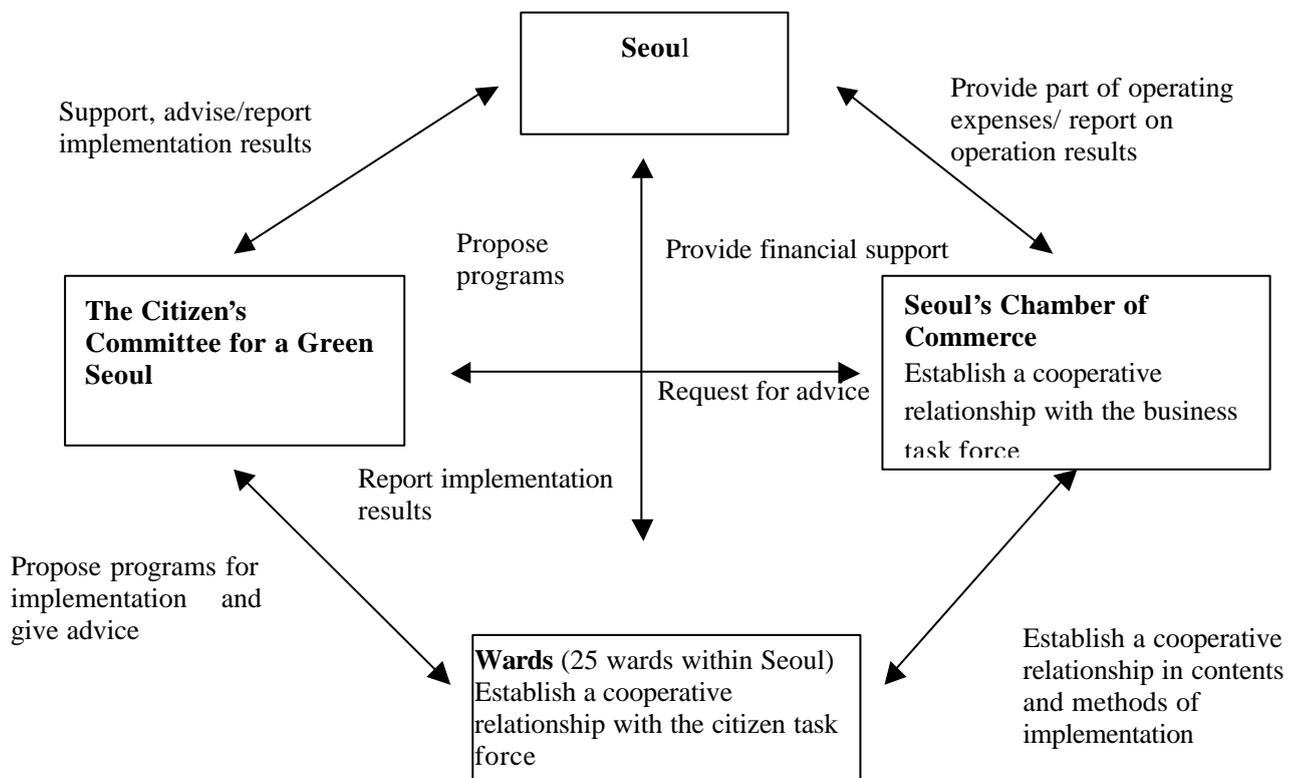
Case Study

After the adoption of the LA21, the metropolitan government and the Citizens' Committee started work on the action plans to achieve the targets set by the LA21, while carrying out various public relations activities such as hosting forums and publishing information brochures to promote LA 21 activities. Unfortunately, Korea had to face with a serious economic crisis before LA21 implementation. The economic, social conditions based on which the LA21 was drafted had changed drastically, forcing the metropolitan government to make major amendments to the LA21. In 1999, after deliberations that lasted for about 5 months, 30 targets and 426 action plans under the first adopted LA21 were either revised or supplemented.

Institutional Framework for Implementation

The institutional framework for implementing LA21 is shown in **Fig. 2** The “*Citizens' Committee for a Green Seoul*” is made up of 94 members including scholars, experts, representatives of citizen groups, journalists, and government officials, etc. The Citizens' Committee plays an important role of gathering the opinions of citizens and environmental NGOs, as well as making proposals of programs. When necessary, the Citizens' Committee even set up its own programs and implements them directly. It also serves as an advisory body to businesses and the metropolitan government. The Chamber of Commerce has a role to initiate business sectors LA21, and carries out public relations activities and environmental education to business employees helping raise their environmental awareness.

Fig. 2 Institutional Framework for Implementing Seoul Agenda 21



To facilitate the operations of the Citizens' Committee, the metropolitan government provides funds to support its budget and dispatches city officials to assist in the implementation of programs. The metropolitan government also gives financial support to specific programs undertaken by the citizen task force through cooperation with the city ward authorities.

Implementation of LA21

LA21 has been implemented mainly through three kinds of activities; public relations activities conducted by The Citizens' Committee for a Green Seoul, promotion of Citizens' project proposals for securing citizens' real participation, and activities carried out by various social entities.

(1) Public relations activities

Extensive public relations activities were carried out especially at the early stage of implementing LA21. In 1998, educational projects targeted at students of 150 elementary, junior high and high schools in Seoul were carried out. In 1999, advertisement was used on the subway to make appeals to the citizens. In 2000, a campaign featuring an LA21 theme song (the public was invited to contribute lyrics to the song) and events such as the Earth Day, No-Car Day were held.

(2) Invitation of Citizens' project proposals

For programs and activities that are more effective for the NGOs, rather than the metropolitan government, to carry out, the metropolitan government builds partnership with the NGOs to implement the programs. Since 1996, citizen groups and environmental NGOs have contributed many original ideas and the metropolitan government supported their activities by providing the necessary funds. As of today, 174 projects were implemented, ranging extensively from environmental education, volunteer training, planting trees in rural areas, reduction of waste, watch for water pollution, monitoring the ecosystems, to the operation of the environment-friendly "green shops."

Table 2 Invitation of Citizen's project

Fiscal year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Funds for support (million won)	284	580	360	360	500
Number of organizations/ projects	21 15	39 40	50 55	30 30	30 34

(3) Activities by various social entities

Although the citizens, businesses, and government offices had their LA21 established, activities were not carried out with enthusiasm at the beginning. The Citizens' Committee examined the situation and decided to form a task force by volunteers in each of these social entities in an effort to improve the situation. This was put into practice in 2000, founding of the citizen task force² and the

² The citizen task force is formed by citizens, local groups, environmental NGOs, and other civil groups wishing to participate in the activity. Currently, it has about 7,000 members carrying out activities in Seoul's 25 wards. To promote environmental activities in everyday life, the task force issued and distributed the check sheets "Navigator to Guard a Green Seoul" introducing 16 items to help individuals, families, and companies to reduce waste and save energy.

business task force³ in July and September, respectively. Presently, preparation is currently under way to form a civil servant task force and a children task force. The task forces do not operate with the traditional top-down public administration system; they work in close cooperation with the metropolitan government and the Citizens' Committee to plan, operates, and assesses activities at their own initiative. There are plans to further review the directions of the various activities and to find ways to promote them.

Evaluation of LA21

Since the adoption of LA21 in June 1997, various public relations activities and programs have been carried out. However, there was no yardstick to measure the progress of LA21. Consequently, no assessment was made on the way LA21 was implemented. For this reason, when LA21 was revised in February 2000, 27 indicators were adopted to evaluate the progress of LA21 in eight different areas. A subcommittee was set up within the Citizens' Committee to examine and evaluate LA21 annually, establishing a system to revise and supplement action plans and activity targets for the future. The first assessment using the indicators and related studies are scheduled to complete in March 2001, and the results will be made available to the public on the Internet.



Achievement and Challenges

It has always been difficult for cities with a large population to get citizens involved in LA21 activities. Seoul has fared extremely well in this respect due to the special efforts it devotes to promoting local and grassroots activities. While maintaining a multi-faceted cooperative relationship with various social entities through the Citizens' Committee, the metropolitan government encourages civil groups and environmental NGOs to initiate their own activities through the "Invitation of Citizens' Project Proposals." Although the metropolitan government provides funds for these activities, it gives the citizens and local organizations autonomy to operate the citizen task force and to determine the activities that it undertakes. Such approach does not easily render result in the short term, but is indispensable to the realization of a sustainable city. Seoul deserves credit to

³ The business task force is formed by the corporate members of Seoul's Chamber of Commerce, wishing to participate in the activity. It works to attain the targets set by businesses according to LA21 by introducing various measures such as cleaner production, environmental accounting, etc.

Table 3 Measurement method for sustainability index of Seoul Agenda 21

ITEM	INDEX (unit)	MESUREMENT METHOD
Seoul, a city where the air is fresh and clean	Per capita oil consumption (unit <i>l</i>)	Per capita oil consumption (gasoline, diesel oil, kerosene, Bunker-C oil) - Annual statistics, Seoul city
	Number of ozone alerts (frequency)	Number of ozone alerts - Seoul city
	Emission from motor vehicles (10,000tons)	Statistics on volume of air pollutants generated nationwide - Ministry of Environment
	Noise in residential areas along roadsides (dB)	Measurement of noise in residential areas along roadsides in Seoul - Seoul city
Seoul, a city where children can enjoy playing in water as much as they please	Water quality of Han River (BOD, mg/ <i>l</i>)	Measurement of water quality of Han River - Seoul city
	Per capita water consumption (<i>l</i>)	Average volume of piped water production / pollution x leakage ratio
	Number of streams being restored to their natural condition (number)	Survey by Seoul city and district government
Seoul, a city where the citizens work hard to reduce waste and recycle it into useful resources	Per capita volume of waste generated (Kg/ person)	(Total volume of waste generated reduction and treatment at source of generation) / population
	Recycling ratio (%)	(Recyclable goods collected / total volume generated) x 100
	Food waste generation (kg/person/day)	Total waste generated / population
Seoul, a city where wildlife has returned	Ration of urban green areas (%)	Statistics on current state of parks - Seoul city
	Number of wetlands to be created	Survey of implementation performance of Seoul city and district governments
	Number of freshwater fish species in the Han River	Survey of ecosystem of the Han River - Seoul city
Seoul, a city where the streets are pleasant, and where promenades and public transportation are favored.	Citizens' satisfaction with pedestrian environment (based on scale of 0 to 100)	Survey of citizens' satisfaction - Seoul city
	Ratio of cars stopping before the stop line at crosswalks	Survey of traffic volume - Green Consumers Network
	Citizen satisfaction with public transportation system	Survey of citizens' satisfaction - Seoul city
	Number of pedestrian fatalities in traffic accidents (person)	Statistics on traffic accidents - National Police Agency
	Number of bicycles per household	Survey - Seoul city
Seoul, a city where citizens work together to create a pleasant and friendly environment	Per capita park area in residential areas	[park area - (national parks + urban natural parks + other parks + area of cemeteries) / population
	Citizens' environmental conservation programs supported by Seoul city	Survey by Seoul city and district governments
Seoul, a cultural center imbued with the richness of history and nature	Number of cultural facilities	Survey by Seoul city and district governments
	Number of experts in district culture	Survey by Seoul city and district governments
	Number of cultural programs per district	Survey by Seoul city and district governments
Seoul, a city of neighborly togetherness	Ratio of convenience facilities	Ratio of convenience facilities - Seoul city
	Number of youth halls	Number of youth hall - Seoul city
	Ratio of employment of the elderly	(Number of the elderly employed through the municipal employment service center / population of the elderly aged 65 or older) x 100
	Ratio of economically active women	White paper on Women - Seoul city

Case Study

have approached LA21 with such a long-term vision.

Due to Korea's economic crisis, Seoul had to amend its LA21 even before it was put into effect. During the revision process, the difference in the understanding and viewpoints among the government, civil groups, and environmental NGOs led to several collisions of opinion. It was through continual dialogue of the parties that the differences were bridged gradually. With regard to the target levels especially, there was intense opposition from the experts and environmental NGOs who seemed to put more weight on finding the ideal solution, whereas the government officials emphasized the feasibility of the measures. A section manager of the Seoul metropolitan government commented that the dialogue process involving different social entities had actually achieved a secondary effect of cultivating mutual understanding among them. The negative impact of the economic crisis created the good opportunity for the concerned parties to build up partnerships before the phase of the implementation. It is believed that such partnerships have contributed immensely to the effective coordination when the activities were carried out later on.

In terms of future challenges, Seoul's city officials emphasized that the rate of citizen participation is still below expectation. Survey results showed that 30% of Seoul's residents still do not know the existence of LA21. Considering the size of the city's population, the figure seems to be already quite impressive. The metropolitan government plans to step up environmental education especially in the areas of developing study materials and organizing participating-style learning programs to boost the participation of the young generation. To give more incentive to civil groups and businesses, the city and the Citizens' Committee are reviewing plans to build a system to assess the activities undertaken by the citizens and businesses and awarding Best Practice.

Another issue involves the actual operation of the "Implementation, Inspection, Evaluation and Feedback" system of the Agenda 21. In addition to evaluating the achievement level of the Agenda targets, the metropolitan government plans to expand the scope of assessment and establish a system to monitor and assess the implementation process of environmental activities by citizens and businesses.

Contact:

Environmental Planning Division, Seoul Metropolitan Government, Korea

Tel: 82-2-3707-9523 Fax: 82-2-3707-9529

E-mail: tofisher @ metro. Seoul. kr

URL: <http://smg.metro.seoul.kr:8001/>

Case Study Vol.7 March 2001

20% Club for Sustainable Cities

Secretariat: c/o Global Environmental Forum

1-9-7, Azabudai, Minato-ku, Tokyo106-0041, Japan

TEL.+81 - 3-5561 - 9735 FAX. +81-3 - 5561 - 9737

<http://www.shonan.ne.jp/~gef20/>

E-mail: yokochi-gef@nifty.com