



Cooperative Grants Programme

Supporting NGOs Within and Beyond CEE borders

Call for CEE and NIS NGO Cooperative Environmental Projects

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) hereby announces a call for proposals to support non-governmental organisation (NGO) cooperative environmental projects. This project is financially supported by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, Division for Eastern and Central Europe (DANCEE).

NGOs from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Newly Independent States (NIS) are invited to apply. The maximum grant amount per project is EUR 35,000 and the total amount available is EUR 200,000. **The deadline for concept papers is July 12, 2002.**

BACKGROUND

The Environment in CEE and NIS and the NGO Movement

The damage to the environment in Central and Eastern Europe presents risks to human health and the natural balance of life. Significant problems of air, water and soil pollution, traffic congestion, deforestation and more still need to be addressed. At the same time, CEE countries are blessed with many relatively clean and pristine natural areas. Remediation of polluted zones and protection of rich biodiversity must take place simultaneously. Accession to the European Union increases the pressure on Central European governments to solve environmental problems without hindering economic development.

At the same time, the development of civil society in CEE and the NIS is underway. NGOs, established by and working for the public, play a key role in this development. Environmental NGOs form one of the biggest and most active civil sectors in the region. In many ways, the fledgling environmental movement helped to bring about the political changes in CEE. Working together on environmental activities, people have been rebuilding a sense of community purpose, improving their local environment, and introducing a new generation to their responsibilities to the world around them. NGOs are growing towards maturation, gaining increased influence and raising the awareness of a broad public in their societies. However, this is a difficult process and support (both in terms of funds and popularity) for the sector has declined in the last few years owing to the hardships of the economic transition. The need for support programmes is, therefore, more crucial than ever.

Addressing environmental problems and measuring their impact is difficult. Governments often ignore or are unable to undertake local projects. Efficiency in tackling environmental problems at the level where they occur locally can be reached by supporting environmental NGOs. As groups of local people, NGOs are

aware of the issues and problems facing their own communities. Through their actions, they solve local problems and begin to address national and region-wide problems, especially via cooperation. Furthermore, NGOs serve to push and sometimes force governments to take action that people cannot take on an individual basis.

Environmental NGOs are usually in favour of establishing East-West cooperation as long as they can find the needed additional funding. Currently the biggest obstacle for establishing more and better East-West cooperation is the lack of financial resources and personal contacts among NGO activists who are working on similar environmental issues. To meet these needs for the NGOs in CEE and the NIS, the REC developed the Cooperative Environmental Grants Programme, which can be adapted for East-East and East-West cooperation.

NGO cooperation within and beyond the CEE borders

East-West cooperation has been promoted by a number of organisations from just before the political changes in CEE and the NIS. This has manifested itself in two main ways: the expansion of networks and the delivery of tailored programmes.

The cooperative grant programme Supporting NGOs Within and Beyond CEE Borders looks to link East and West (cooperation between CEE/NIS and Denmark), and East and East (cooperation between CE, SEE and NIS). There is a gulf in cooperation between the NIS and CEE — mostly due to traditional donor funding divisions — that this programme aims to address. Additionally, the support is open to eligible organisations and therefore cooperation can occur where there is interest and not only along existing members of a pan-European group. The opportunity is also open across the region.

This grant programme primarily aims to promote NGO sub-regional cooperation between countries in CE, SEE and the NIS to provide solutions to cross-border or region-wide environmental problems by enabling them to run cooperative projects. This entails support for their activities through funding and assistance in developing positive cooperative ties with partner NGOs in the CE, SEE, NIS and Denmark.

To encourage NGOs to work together in solving environmental problems, the REC offers grants of up to EUR 35,000. The topic of this call for proposals is not pre-defined, but cooperation between NGOs from CE, SEE and NIS, and Danish NGOs is an important criteria. NGOs can address any type of environmental issue as long as it represents a problem that is faced by at least two countries. When two or more NGOs from two or more countries find a common problem, they can develop a project idea and submit a concept paper together.

ELIGIBILITY

Only registered non-governmental organisations from CE (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), SEE (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Romania and Yugoslavia) and NIS (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldavia, Russia and Ukraine) whose work focuses primarily on the environment, are eligible to apply.

NGOs must propose a project that includes cooperation with an NGO partner in at least one other eligible country. The project may be no longer than 15 months in duration. Proposals that include Danish NGOs or an NGO(s) from a country outside the lead NGO's sub-region (CE, SEE or NIS) will be favoured. Cooperation with local and regional authorities as well as with the business sector is also encouraged and will be regarded favourably during the grant awarding. Danish NGOs showing interest in working in the region are eligible for funding through Small Grants Facility Programme run by the Danish Outdoor Council.

Applicants must possess:

- experience in managing environmental projects;

- at least one staff member who speaks English;
- access to necessary office equipment (e.g., telephone, computer, fax, modem, etc.); and
- the ability to communicate and cooperate with similar organisations from other countries.

LIMITATIONS

1. NGOs currently running a cooperative project supported by the REC cannot apply for another cooperative grant before the final report of the previous project is submitted and approved.
2. NGOs may not submit more than one concept paper as a **lead NGO** and cannot be involved in more than two concept papers. They may apply as a **partner NGO** in two separate concept papers.
3. When an organisation is involved in two concept papers, the NGO must appoint different project coordinators for each project proposal.
4. Danish NGOs are **not** eligible for REC funding. However, they can receive funding through the grant programme run by the Danish Outdoor Council.

THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The objective of the project is to promote **NGO cooperation** on priority environmental issues within and beyond CEE and NIS borders. The aim is to **provide solutions to cross-border or region-wide environmental problems** by enabling CEE/NIS NGOs to run cooperative projects and **involve Danish NGO** expertise. NGOs from 22 CEE and NIS countries, together with interested Danish NGOs, will work on projects which address regional environmental concerns such as EU accession, air, soil and water pollution, traffic congestion, deforestation, protection of biodiversity values of cross-border areas and conservation of migratory species etc. Projects must include actions with direct and concrete outputs, awareness raising, public participation and follow-up.

Only NGOs working on **cooperative** projects can apply for a grant. NGOs from at least two different countries will work together to solve an environmental issue that affects them both. **Projects that also involve cooperation with Danish NGOs and/or NGOs from another sub-region (CE, SEE or NIS) are encouraged and will be favoured when the grants are awarded.** In addition, within this cooperative grant programme the REC also encourages NGOs to cooperate closely with other institutions such as local and national governments, schools, farms, businesses, and universities.

Projects should address **cross-border** or **region-wide** environmental problems. This call for proposals is open to any environmental issues! Some **transboundary or cross-border** problems may be geographical, for example: a shared river, watershed or habitat. Another **cross-border** issue could be pollution. Global climate change — caused by changes in landscape, an increase in traffic and the inefficient use of fossil fuels — is a pollution problem that threatens everyone and addressing it requires strong international cooperation. NGOs could also work together to save a rare and endangered bird species that migrates from one country to another.

Region-wide projects are slightly different from cross-border projects. Region-wide projects may deal with problems common to all CEE and NIS countries, for example, sustainable development. NGOs may also wish to cooperate on problems of environmental education, recycling, resource efficiency, public participation in decision-making and implementation of environmental legislation, or the environmental implications of accession to the European Union.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS

Projects may address any environmental topic that is a priority in the CEE and/or NIS region and is common to all countries involved! There is no limit on the range of topics. The only limit is that projects must be a **cooperative** effort. It is preferable that **Danish NGO expertise is involved** in the implementation of the project so that Danish NGOs experience and skills can be transferred to the region. In past grant submissions, NGOs proposed projects on a variety of topics, such as energy, species protection, environmental education, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, sustainable rural development, sustainable development in general, watershed protection, environmental policy and environmental computer networks. **Any topic will be considered as long as it represents a cross-border or region-wide environmental problem that can be solved through cooperation!**

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application is a two-stage process. In the first stage, NGOs submit a short concept paper briefly describing the projects and expressing their interest in cooperating to solve a cross-border or region-wide environmental problem. The concept paper should involve NGOs from at least two different countries that will work together to address a common environmental problem. **NGOs should begin** by finding partners in other CEE/NIS countries working on similar topics. They may wish to locate potential partners by consulting the following resources:

- The REC's *NGO Directory* — A hard copy of the directory is available at REC country offices. The directory can also be accessed or ordered free of charge through the REC's Web site (www.rec.org).
- Personal contacts, other NGOs, local universities, libraries and agencies.

Cross sub-regional cooperation among CE, SEE and NIS NGOs should be considered when looking for partners.

The REC will evaluate the concept papers based on defined standards and criteria (described in the section "Evaluation of Concept Papers"). NGOs whose concept papers have been selected and who have expressed interest in cooperating with Danish NGOs or NGOs from other sub-regions (CE, SEE or NIS) will be further assisted by the REC in developing new partnerships through the **partnership service**.

In the second stage, those NGOs whose concept papers have been selected will be invited to prepare and submit a full proposal with the involvement of the Danish NGO partner and other sub-region partners identified after the concept paper stage. A start-up grant of up to EUR 1,500 will be offered by the REC to NGOs in order to help them meet the partners and prepare a full application. In addition, the REC will assist the NGOs in preparing the full proposal by providing training/assistance to the NGOs during the project preparation meeting.

An independent panel of experts and donor representatives will evaluate the full proposals based on set criteria. The Danish NGOs will be funded through the Danish NGO Small Grants Facility run by the Danish Outdoor Council.

STAGE 1. CONCEPT PAPERS (deadline July 12, 2002)

At this stage, NGOs agree on a topic and develop a project idea together. The concept paper must be submitted in English and include the following:

- Form for Concept Papers: applicants must fill out the attached form and prepare a brief project description following the instructions provided in the form template;

- Statement of Cooperation (for CEE and NIS partners);
- Project Preparation Grant;

Writing a full proposal for a cooperative grant may be challenging since the project partners come from different countries. Therefore, the REC offers a "Start-up Grant" of up to **EUR 1,500** to give you the possibility to meet the project partners and prepare the full proposal. The meeting can take place in any of the countries involved in the project. The only costs that will be covered by the REC are travel, hotel, and food. The Danish NGO partners interested to attend the project preparation meeting can apply for funds through the grant programme run by the Danish Outdoor Council.

- Eligibility documents: each lead and partner NGO(s) involved in the concept paper that request funding from the REC should provide the following documents separately:
 - 1) a copy of the NGO's registration;
 - 2) a letter of support from the president or director of the NGO — the letter should demonstrate the commitment of the NGO to implement the project and show support for the person nominated as project coordinator; and
 - 3) a short organisational profile, including: a brief presentation (leaflets or brochure would suffice if available), a list of projects implemented and annual budget for the past three years.
- NGO Partner Request Form.

The lead NGO is responsible for submitting the complete original concept paper to the **REC's head office in Szentendre**. All NGOs involved in the concept paper must send copies of this document to the REC office **in their country**. The concept paper should be sent only by mail (fax and e-mail submissions will not be considered). The concept paper must arrive at the REC offices by the end of the day on July 12 or it will not be accepted.

EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT PAPERS (August 16, 2002)

The concept papers will be evaluated by an internal REC panel. The REC country offices will also review and provide comments on the concept papers. Projects will be selected according to the criteria outlined below:

- The project addresses a cross-border or region-wide environmental problem. The problem is a priority for the countries involved or the CEE and/or NIS region.
- The concept paper demonstrates that the problem can be best addressed cooperatively.
- Cooperation with Danish NGOs and other sub-regions (CE, SEE, NIS) is regarded favourably.
- The goal and objectives of the project are feasible. The project shows concrete environmental impact.
- The roles of the NGOs involved in the project are justified and responsibilities are divided in an appropriate manner.
- The NGOs have experience in project management and demonstrate the capacity to implement cooperative projects.
- The budget is reasonable and cost-effective.

The REC strongly recommends that applicants take the selection criteria into consideration when preparing the content of the concept paper. The concept papers will be scored and ranked against these criteria. The top concept papers will be then selected on this basis.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

If you do not have a partner NGO from another sub-region (CE, SEE and NIS) or Denmark, the REC will attempt to identify a possible partner upon request through the partnership service. In order to express interest in finding a partner from Denmark and/or from any of the sub-regions (CE, SEE, NIS), NGOs should fill out the Partner Request Form and submit it along with the concept paper.

Partner Request Form: The lead NGO must fill out the NGO Partner Request Form and submit it to the REC along with the other documents of the concept paper. The REC will look for partners based on the needs expressed and therefore the information in the request form should be clear and accurate. The partner search will commence as soon as the concept paper is approved, and the search will intensify from August 16, 2002 to October 7, 2002. However, the REC will try to assist you to identify your partner before the concept paper stage upon request.

The REC will utilise its information resources and NGO contacts to actively distribute the request forms and make contacts with Danish, CE, SEE and NIS NGOs.

Partnership Service: The mission of the partnership service is to assist NGOs in establishing sub-regional cooperation as well as to involve Danish NGOs in their projects.

After the lead NGO submits the concept paper with the NGO Partner Request Form filled in, the REC will make a decision on the concept paper. The partnership service will forward the forms of the selected concept papers to our NGO partner in Denmark — the Danish Outdoor Council. It will also make use of the REC's internal resources and send the forms to the REC country offices. Positive responses from potential partner NGOs will be promptly sent to interested NGOs before the project preparation meeting takes place. The REC will assist the NGOs in establishing contact with each other, but afterwards it will be the responsibility of NGOs themselves to manage their own cooperation and communication. The REC will follow the partnership's development and provide support upon request. Through the partnership service, the REC will try to find interested partners in Denmark or in another sub-region. The partnership facilitation, however, will also depend on the interest and willingness of the NGOs replying to the NGO Partnership Request Form. Therefore, the success of the partnership cannot be guaranteed.

STAGE 2: FULL PROPOSAL (Deadline October 21, 2002)

The NGOs with selected concept papers are eligible for a project preparation grant (or start up grant). The purpose of the start-up grant is to help partners meet and work together on a full proposal. The exact amount of the start-up grant, which cannot exceed EUR 1,500, is approved during the evaluation of the concept paper. The funds will be transferred to the lead NGO's bank account. The project coordinator of the lead NGO must keep careful records of how the money was spent and submit a report together with the full proposal.

Full Proposal Preparation

The REC will assist NGOs in preparing the full proposal by providing training and assistance to the NGOs during the project preparation meeting. Trainers will be assigned to take part in the preparation meeting of the NGOs. Their role is to assist in preparing the full proposals based on the Project Preparation Guidelines and Methodology provided by the REC. It is requested that the date of the project preparation meeting be

agreed upon with the REC to insure the presence of trainers. The meeting should be used to clearly define the role and responsibilities of all NGOs involved in the project and agree on forms of communication. The guidelines should be carefully followed when preparing the full proposal.

As an additional step during the project preparation meeting, the trainers will also assist with further development of the partnerships. Their task will be to work with NGOs on developing the partnership roles and responsibilities in line with the requirements of the project proposal and of the cooperative grant programme.

If a Danish partner is involved in the project, that NGO should also participate in the project preparation meeting. The Danish NGO's involvement in the proposal preparation, as well as in the entire project, will be supported through other sources (the Danish Outdoor Council).

The full proposal must arrive at the REC offices by the end of the day on October 21. Only proposals sent by mail will be accepted.

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT PROPOSALS (November 18, 2002)

An independent expert panel will evaluate all proposals. Donor representatives will also be part of the panel. The proposals are first pre-screened by REC staff for completeness. The expert panel will score and rank the proposals based on standard criteria:

- **Feasibility.** Will the partners be able to accomplish the goals with the amount of money requested? Is the implementation plan realistic?
- **Extent of cooperation:** How will the NGOs share the responsibilities for implementing the project? Is there involvement by a Danish NGO or sub-regional cooperation?
- **Environmental impact.** Will the project result in concrete improvements to the environmental situation in the region and in the different countries?

Full criteria will be provided in the Project Proposal Guidelines. Acceptable proposals that do not receive funding from the REC will be recommended to the Danish Outdoor Council's granting programme.

WINNERS MEETING AND START OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (December 6, 2002)

Grant winners will be notified and invited to the REC's head office in Szentendre, Hungary for a "winners meeting." At this meeting, NGOs will present their joint project to the other grantees. Danish NGOs involved in the grants will be invited to participate in the winners meeting as well.

During the winners meeting the NGOs will review and sign an award agreement. This document specifies the reporting conditions and disbursement schedule. The grantees will meet the grant officer and financial assistant from the REC's head office, who will work closely with them throughout the project's implementation.

Grant winners should expect the first grant instalments no sooner than one month after the award agreement is signed.

Additional Information

For more information on this programme, interested parties should contact Cerasela Stancu at the REC's head office (e-mail: cstancu@rec.org; Tel: [36-26] 504-000; Fax: [36-26] 311-294). The REC country and field offices will also be available to provide assistance. The original concept paper should arrive by mail at

the REC's head office (Ady Endre ut 9-11, 2000 Szentendre, Hungary) **by the end of the day on July 12, 2002.** Copies of the concept papers should also be sent to the **REC country office each partner's country.**

CONCEPT PAPER FORM

Please type or write neatly in dark ink. The Form for Concept Papers should be submitted together with a complete project description, a statement of cooperation from the partner(s), and the Project Preparation Grant and Partner Request Form (if applicable). Cooperating partners must sign the statement of cooperation. If there are more than two partner NGOs, please make copies of the Statement of Cooperation as necessary.

REC PROJECT NUMBER (to be filled in by the REC):	
Project title:	

Lead NGO Information

Name:			
Registration number:		Telephone:	
E-mail address:		Fax:	
Address:			
Project coordinator:			
Name of individual preparing this proposal (if different from above):			
Project duration (# months):		Total project budget amount requested from the REC (in EUR):	
Bank name:		Name of the account holder:	
Bank address:		Account number and SWIFT code:	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide your project description separately, addressing each of the three points below. Limit the description to two A4 pages.

1. Describe the environmental issue your project will address and specify why it is a problem for each of the partner countries. Explain why the environmental problem is a priority for the countries involved and for the region.
2. Describe the actions you will take to address this environmental issue and provide a time schedule for completing these tasks. The goal, objectives and expected main results of the project should be clearly specified.
3. Estimate the total budget for the project. Explain how much will be required from the REC and how much funding you have from other sources. REC funding is up to EUR 35,000.

PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT

In order to assist you in preparing the full proposal, the REC offers up to EUR 1,500 for a meeting between the partners. If EUR 1,500 is not sufficient, NGOs are expected to fund part of the costs themselves. The REC will cover the travel, hotel, and meal costs during the trip. The REC does not pay per diems. Because the REC encourages the use of the most environmentally friendly form of transportation, travel to the meeting by train, bus or car should be considered in this order. Air travel will only be accepted when the travel distance is very large (for example from Estonia to Hungary).

Estimate the costs of partner travel accommodation and food to a **total of up to EUR 1,500**. Do **not** include per diems.

Item	Cost
Travel: (name of the people travelling, destination, price)	
Accommodation: (number of people/night * price)	
Food: (number of people * price)	
Total	

Please sign and date this concept paper:

Signature of project coordinator (if your NGO has an official stamp, please stamp here!)	Date:

STATEMENT OF COOPERATION

Project title:	
-----------------------	--

Statement:

By signing this Statement of Cooperation, we agree to work together throughout project's preparation and implementation. If this concept paper is approved, we plan to meet and develop the full proposal. If the proposal is selected, we shall implement the project together. We agree that the lead NGO is responsible for communicating and presenting all materials to the REC. The lead NGO is also responsible for the project's overall management and communication with the REC.

Partner NGO Information

Name:			
Registration number:		Telephone:	
E-mail address:		Fax:	
Postal address:			
Name of the project coordinator of the partner NGO:			
Signature and date: (please stamp your name)			
Name of the project coordinator of the lead NGO:			
Signature and date (Please stamp your name)			

Note: If more than two organisations are cooperating on this project, please copy the Statement of Cooperation as necessary. The lead NGO should send the signed statements to each partner NGO(s) for signature. The partner NGO(s) should return the signed statements to the lead NGO, who will include them in the concept paper package.



THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
for Central and Eastern Europe



DANCEE

Danish Cooperation for Environment in Eastern Europe
Ministry of Environment and Energy

NGO Partner Request Form

Since promoting the regional cooperation and partnership within and beyond the CEE borders is the main aim of this project, the REC will assist NGOs in finding partners through its partnership service.

General Terms:

This form should be filled out by the NGOs who, in addition to the cooperative partners identified at the concept paper stage, are interested in cooperating with either/or:

- Danish NGOs
- NGOs from the following sub-regions: CE, SEE and NIS

By submitting the NGO Partner Request Form, the lead NGO advertises the project idea and expresses interest in cooperating with other NGOs, whose role in the project is outlined briefly.

If the concept paper is approved, the information included in this form will be distributed by the REC to the Danish and CE/SEE/NIS NGO communities to help locate an additional project partner(s). Projects involving sub-regional cooperation and/or Danish partners will be favoured during the evaluation process.

Further explanation of the partnership process is provided in the Grants Announcement.

Partnership Form:

In order for the partnership service to help identify potential NGO partners from Denmark or any of the sub-regions mentioned above, the lead NGO should provide the following information:

<i>Project number</i> <i>(Filled out by REC)</i>	
Lead NGO Information	
Name:	
Field of activities:	
Name of the project coordinator:	
Telephone:	Fax:
E-mail address:	Web site:
Postal address:	
Information about proposed cooperation	
Project title:	

Please give a brief description of the project (not more than 100 words):
Please describe the expected role of the partner:
Requested partnership (check no more than two choices; if two, one of them must be Danish):
<input type="checkbox"/> Danish Sub-regional: <input type="checkbox"/> CE <input type="checkbox"/> SEE <input type="checkbox"/> NIS
Please justify the proposed cooperation activities:

The NGO should fill out this form and send it by mail along with the concept paper application by July 12, 2002 to:

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
 Ady Endre ut 9-11,
 2000 Szentendre,
 Hungary

For more information on the partnership service please contact Entela Pinguli at (36-26) 504-065 or by e-mail at Epinguli@rec.org.