

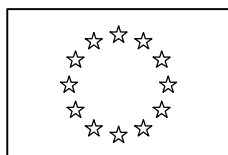
Task Force for Implementation of the
Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme
for South Eastern Europe
(REReP Task Force)

10th meeting
November 27, 2007, Brussels, Belgium

**Progress report on REReP implementation
since the 9th REReP Task Force meeting**

Agenda Item “Progress in REReP implementation and Work Plan 2007 – 2008”

Description: This document summarises the overall progress on REReP implementation since the 9th REReP Task Force meeting of September 28-29, 2006, Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
Action required: Delegates are invited to take note of the presented information, discuss and provide guidance for follow-up activities.



The activities of the REReP Task Force are supported by the European Union CARDS Programme

Overview

This progress report highlights the major developments in REReP implementation since the 9th REReP Task Force meeting of September 28-29, 2006, Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The projects implemented in the past year have followed their timeframes and agreed outputs. Country ownership has been vital in addressing specific countries' needs efficiently throughout the implementation of the Programme. The SEE countries continue to invest efforts and resources to meet the goals of environmental reconstruction and EU approximation.

During the period, 17 projects have been successfully accomplished, and thanks to the strong support from donors, 21 new projects have started. The total amount of new donor support is EUR 5,325,243.¹ The distribution of this support within the priority areas is as follows: institution building: EUR 4,356,133 (81.8%); civil society support: EUR 396,417 (7.4%); regional and cross-border cooperation: EUR 263,909 (5.0%) and reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity: EUR 308,784 (5.8%). A summary of activities is provided below under the four priority areas of the programme.

The 9th REReP TF meeting has discussed the draft work plan. Based on the comments received, corrections have been made. The final draft was circulated for final approval and adoption in December 2006. In 2007, funding has been received for the implementation of the agreed tasks in the following areas:

- REReP Task Force Secretariat Operations
- Assistance in Environmental Law Drafting
- Assistance in Environmental Investments

Beside activities in these areas, a number of other activities and projects was also implemented as per the priority areas of REReP, which are the following:

- Institution Building
- Civil Society Support
- Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation
- Reducing Environmental Health Threats and Loss of Biodiversity

As per the proposal of the European Commission the activities linked to enforcement and compliance (e.g. ECENA) are not part of the REReP work plan.

In October 2007, the REReP Task Force Secretariat published the new promotional leaflet ***The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South-Eastern Europe: Foundation for Integration***. It replaces the promotional leaflet *The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe: Model for a Successful Assistance Mechanism*, which was published in 2003. The new leaflet is totally updated and revised and gives an overview about the development and structure of the REReP process as well as about the activities and projects implemented in every REReP priority area.

The PDF version will be available soon on the REReP website <http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REREP>.

¹ The numbers are calculated based on the information submitted to the REReP Secretariat by the end of October 2007.



Priority area 1: Institution Building

Accomplished projects

Wastewater Treatment with Non-conventional Technologies in Mostar

Starting date: January 2006

Finishing date: June 2007

Project budget: EUR 128.250

Beneficiary country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donor information: Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway

The project aimed to assist in solving environmental problems related to wastewater treatment in Mostar through the introduction of the non-conventional technologies. It improved the capacities of local authorities and other key stakeholders through organising training sessions, creating guidelines on identification, development and preparation of projects on non-conventional technologies; and development of concrete project proposal for non-conventional technologies in the Municipality of Mostar. The main project output is the guideline “Waste water treatment with non-conventional technologies” developed by group of experts and disseminated to representatives of governmental institutions, business sector, universities and non-governmental organisations. Upon the guidelines, project documentation for the pilot area (Bosnjaci – suburban settlement of Mostar), was prepared by contractor (Civil Engineering Faculty of University of Mostar) and delivered to the local authorities in charge of the local infrastructure. All the project results were presented to local stakeholders at the closing workshop held in June 2007.

Water and Wastewater in Industry: A Training Programme

Starting date: January 1, 2006

Finishing date: June 30, 2007

Project budget: EUR 136.800

Beneficiary countries: Croatia

Donor information: Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

This project aimed to build the link between the emerging IPPC obligations to industry with emphasis to water and wastewater issues, and concrete pollution prevention (CP) and control measures that can be taken to lead to the full compliance to Directive. The specific objectives of the project were to provide insight into IPPC permitting, monitoring and reporting, BAT Concept, with emphasis on wastewater issues, to provide the competent authorities and operators of the installations with training and guidelines for achieving compliance with IPPC Directive, regarding pollutant releases to water and present EU and regional best practices.

The project objectives were achieved through the complex training, i.e. through the series of interactive training activities for several industrial sectors, and relevant authorities, including the site-visits to the participating industries. Directive implies that every industrial facility with the production capacity exceeding the threshold values must prevent or lower environmental impacts, which is achieved through the process of issuing environmental (integrated) permit. Thus, the training participants from industry had filled-in the pilot IPPC

application during the training in order to gain the insight into the collection of data that would be needed in the near future, when IPPC Directive comes into force in Croatia.

During the training, 4 workshops were conducted, including the introduction (information) seminar and final (dissemination) seminar at which larger number of participants from food-processing industry and authorities in charge of transposition and implementation of Directive participated.

Sava River Inland Waterway Transport Study

Starting date: June 11, 2007

Finishing date: October 31, 2007

Project budget: EUR 12.700

Beneficiary countries: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia

Donor information: Booz Allen Hamilton

Despite its natural advantages, transportation on the Sava River, which links Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia with ports on the Adriatic, is not currently at full capacity. Nevertheless, river transportation is increasingly perceived as an ecological and sustainable way to contribute to the region's economic growth. The goal of this project was to produce a written report, based on the work of four national legal experts, reviewing the laws, rules and other regulations affecting the transportation of goods and passengers on the Sava River.

Their research included (1) an identification of the government organizations responsible for commercial river transport in the region, a description of their role within the national governments, and a general portrayal of staff structure; (2) a comparative assessment of European Union laws and regulations governing inland waterway transport and those of the beneficiary countries; and (3) an assessment of the commercial institutions and regulatory bodies responsible for various aspects of river transport operations, such as port and fleet operators. The goal of the report was to propose measures to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of Sava River transport; and to offer guidelines for financial investments regarding Sava River transportation.

STAR Project-Preparation of Social Assessment Study

Starting date: January 30, 2007

Finishing date: April 30, 2007

Project budget: EUR 29.570

Beneficiary countries: Serbia

Donor information: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management – Serbia

The agricultural sector in Serbia is not prepared to cope with the competition with EU. Likewise, it is very difficult for agricultural sector to compete with neighbour states due to cumulative problems. Organic production is seen as having greatest potential, mainly because of the available grassland resources in mountain region. Serbian Government is trying to strengthen the environmental management and restructuring of the agriculture sector with the aim to be more responsive to EU requirements for enhanced exports.

In order to improve the competitiveness of Serbian agriculture and income of family farms, one of the primary tasks is the establishment of efficient mechanisms that will use the potentials of rural areas. Serbia urgently needs to develop a functional agricultural advisory service with well-trained and informed staff to assist family farms and agro processors to meet their needs for knowledge and information including production and value adding technologies, access to credit and markets, governments and EU policies, regulation, standards, environmental, food quality and safety requirements etc.

The Social Assessment Study consisted of two parts:

1. The part which is related to the existing system of: a) transfer of knowledge, b) information, c) business connections and d) local partnership and availability of rural services in the field of agriculture and rural development; and
2. Part dealing with social issues related to improving agro-environmental production, environmentally sustainable rural tourism, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use in the pilot area of Stara Planina Park of Nature.

Mining for closure-UNEP Vienna

Starting date: March 19, 2007

Finishing date: April 30, 2007

Project budget: EUR 19.590

Beneficiary countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244)

Donor information: UNEP – Grid Arendal

The workshop has been organized within the framework of the Environment & Security Initiative (ENVSEC). Throughout the Western Balkans, ENVSEC has identified contaminated mine waters – and the waterways that receive and carry them – as prime source for transboundary environmental problems. These contaminated mine waters arise from mines, mine dumps and mining areas and are characterized by low pH, elevated concentrations of heavy metals and increased salinity loads. Such pollution can cause substantial damage in freshwater ecosystems and in public water sources due to their bio-chemical and eco-toxicological effects.

The aim of the workshop was to stimulate broad and effective uptake of such techniques throughout South East European jurisdictions in order to support risk mitigation and general improvement of living conditions in the region. Further, specific objectives were to substantially increase the knowledge of important decision makers and practitioners of:

- Best practice or innovative and robust mine water treatment techniques and technologies, with a focus on passive and semi passive techniques;
- Technical needs and requirements for cost effective site assessment techniques – particularly focused on assessment of mine waters and effluents;
- The current status of European legislation as it relates to mine waters and effluents;
- Design procedures and examples that can be utilized as a basis for experience sharing among practitioners in their own home countries.

The international experts taking part in the workshop presented their work and experiences and were involved in the workshop exercises based on real problem sites located in South Eastern Europe. The Workshop gathered representatives of countries from the region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and representatives of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244), representatives of non-governmental organizations and further international experts and participants.

Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles

Starting date: June 15, 2006

Finishing date: June 15, 2007

Project budget: EUR 9.846

Beneficiary country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donor information: UNEP

The main goal of the project was to promote the phase-out of leaded petrol in Bosnia and Herzegovina along with the use of low-sulphur fuels, concurrently with requirements for cleaner vehicle technology. The main activity

within the project was a round table on the subject of “Possibilities for reducing the use of leaded petrol in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, organized jointly by the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles and the Regional Environmental Center and held in Sarajevo on November 6th 2006. The meeting was attended by different stakeholders, ranging from government representatives to NGOs. The event focused on the current situation in Bosnia & Herzegovina in terms of fuel quality and the vehicle fleet, and prospects for change and benefiting from international experience. The round table was followed by an awareness raising campaign (this follow-up activity was in fact an implementation of one of the conclusions reached at the round table). The objective of the campaign was to warn citizens of the negative consequences of using leaded petrol, with special emphasis on health effects. The campaign was conducted through radio clip broadcasts and distribution of leaflets via gas stations.

The main outcomes of the project include: improved communication between different sectors on clean fuel and vehicle issues; a better understanding of how cleaner fuels and vehicles can improve air quality; a clearer idea of steps to be taken nationally to address vehicular emissions; and strengthened awareness of the general population about the dangers of using leaded petrol.

Environmental Infrastructure Investment Project Preparation in the Water Sector
Available sources of finance for water infrastructure projects in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Starting date: November, 2006

Finishing date: March, 2007

Project budget: EUR 11,813

Beneficiary countries: former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Donor information: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria

This project was based on the specific needs and experience of former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in preparing waste-water-related environmental investment projects. The project covered issues such as the strategic planning of the investments, feasibility studies, project development and funding. Therefore, it is relevant for the whole SEE region. It provides valuable guidelines on the economic, technical and policy aspects of project preparation in the water sector

Current projects

Bridging the gaps II

Starting date: August 6, 2007

Finishing date: December 15, 2007

Project budget: EUR 14.286

Beneficiary countries: Montenegro

Donor information: UNEP/DEWA – Kenya

The second phase of the project “Bridging the Gaps: Enhancing MEA Implementation in the Balkans” (see http://www.unep.org/DEC/Events/mdg_meeting_vienna.asp for more information on phase 1 of the project) is focusing on the Republic of Montenegro and aims to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to comply with and enforce Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in 2 thematic areas: Biodiversity and Chemicals/waste. The main project outputs include an assessment of the current national (and sub-regional) organizational infrastructures of the country with regard to the implementation of relevant MEAs, and a National Implementation Plan.

These outputs have been presented in the EfE Conference and will be discussed during the national training course that will take place in Podgorica end of November 2007.

New projects

Local Environmental Action Planning for Sustainability in the South Eastern Europe

Starting date: November 2007

Finishing date: October 2010

Project budget: EUR 2.609.000

Beneficiary country: Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244), Serbia

Donor information: Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Support to local environmental planning through developing LEAPs remains one of top priority needs articulated by local authorities in the SEE region and Turkey. This is because poverty still plagues these communities, while the status of decentralization, absence of infrastructural investments, weak local institutions, and frequent shifts in political structures and low speed of institutional reforms are major challenges for their institutions. The REC mobilized its expertise in this field and kept providing multi-dimensional support to local stakeholders (local authorities/administration, local institutions, NGOs and the general public) to combat poverty by advancing strategic environmental plans, capacity development and implement/fund pilot priority projects. Participation and stakeholder involvement remained at the core of this support.

Local communities from SEE outlined major steps to be taken towards local sustainability in the form of Joint Conclusions adopted at the regional conference “Roadmap for Local Sustainability in SEE - Local Initiative in South-eastern Europe”, held in Becej, Serbia in June 2007. This important document states commitment of local communities to implement and further develop LEAPs as tools for planning for local sustainable development (efficient public participation in decision-making, facilitating environmental investments, and improving environmental management), while remaining committed to mobilizing their resources and searching for other national and international forms of support to satisfy their needs.

Priority Environmental Investment Programme

Starting date: May, 2007

Finishing date: May 2009

Project budget: EUR 400.000

Beneficiary countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244)

Donor information: European Commission

The challenge of financing environmental infrastructure projects in the SEE countries is very significant. The key barriers to successful development and implementation of environmental investment infrastructure projects include: lack of domestic sources of finance, inefficient project preparation which hinders the flow of assistance money to the region, not favourable conditions for borrowing, and low level of private sector involvement.

The Priority Environmental Investment Programme (PEIP) introduces a long term approach supporting the SEE countries in developing more environmental investment infrastructure projects and in stimulating increased channelling of financial assistance to the region for investment projects implementation. Since its beginning in 2002 PEIP supported the SEE countries through assistance in identifying and prioritising investment infrastructure projects in line with the EU requirements, developing a list of priority environmental projects, developing infrastructure investment projects concepts, providing assistance in formulating of environmental problems into bankable investment projects proposals, facilitating dialogue between project proposals and financing institutions and facilitating exchange of expertise between environmental financing experts from SEE and other European countries.

The PEIP supports national environmental investment planning in SEE, through institutional strengthening and capacity building. The work covers the air, water, and waste sectors, which represent the priority environmental investment-heavy needs in the region. The PEIP also provides valuable information to the donor community and international financing institutions (IFIs), including background information on environmental and institutional needs and priorities, the status of environmental investment planning in the region, and a pipeline of priority environmental infrastructure projects in a strategic framework.

The main objective of the project is to reduce the pressure on the environment in the SEE region through increasing the ability of the authorities to develop and implement environmental investment infrastructure projects and to increase the flow of financial assistance channelled to the region. To build capacities of the SEE countries in relation to improving implementation mechanisms of the key EU investment-heavy directives and ensuring better preparation of environmental infrastructure investment projects, which have to comply with these directives.

The Activities envisaged are the following:

Activity 1: Developing updated lists of infrastructure investment projects.

Project team in cooperation with the countries national authorities updates information on preparation and implementation of infrastructure investment projects in the region. Results are presented in updated lists of prioritised projects. There will be four updates within the project lifetime, every half a year. Project team develops also a report on the progress achieved on infrastructure projects preparation and implementation every half a year.

Activity 2: Manuals on developing and preparing environmental infrastructure projects development.

There will be two manuals developed related to developing and preparing of environmental infrastructure investment projects. The specific topic of manuals will be developed in cooperation with national authorities.

Activity 3: Regional Meetings

There will be four regional meetings organised, following preparation of progress report on lists of projects (Activity 1). Regional meetings will be attended by national authorities and donors' community with the main aim to discuss the progress on environmental infrastructure projects development and to discuss the way forward with securing finance for investment projects.

Activity 4: National Workshops

Seven national workshops on developing environmental infrastructure projects will be organised. The workshops will be directed to project proponents representing high priority projects from the PEIP project list. The workshops will be designed to tackle issues relation to the preparation of mature and bankable projects. The workshop sessions will be tailored to specific in-country situation.

Activity 5: Final publication

At the end of the project a major report on the progress of environmental infrastructure development in the SEE will be prepared, highlighting new barriers and good examples from the countries.

Assistance in Environmental Law Drafting in SEE

Starting date: May 2007

Finishing date: May 2009

Project budget: EUR 300.000

Beneficiary countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, including Kosovo as defined by the UNSCR 1244, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Donor information: European Commission

In recent years, the countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE) have made significant progress in meeting their obligations within the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The current project is Task II of the "Regional

Environmental Reconstruction Programme CARDS TASK II Environmental Law drafting in SEE” and promotes the efficient and effective development of comprehensive legislative frameworks in compliance with the EU environmental acquis, as well as cooperation on environmental law in the region.

At the national level, it focuses on the delivery of capacity building assistance to the SEE region on EU environmental law through targeted topical workshops and study visits. This is completed by the support for the operation of the Environmental Law Approximation Network (ELAN) including the organization of the seventh and eighth meetings of ELAN.

At the national level, the task includes progress monitoring work for potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, including Kosovo as defined by the UNSCR 1244, and Montenegro) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This activity began in October 2007 and will run to August 2008 and consists in assessing progress since the first progress monitoring carried out from 2006 to May-June 2007, through tables of concordance and implementation questionnaires for 64 different acts. Part of the task concerns information tools and more specifically the update of the project website including a Matrix of country-based environmental law projects. A newsletter is also planned to be prepared and distributed every 6 months.

Development of a database for the state of environment in municipalities

Starting date: July 12, 2007

Finishing date: July 2008

Project budget: EUR 17.940

Beneficiary countries: former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Donor information: Ministry of Environment – former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The aim of the project is to develop a database of indicators on the state of environment for 5 environmental sectors: air, water, waste, nature and soil + land use issues. It will serve as a base for reporting on the state of environment at local level, but it will be used also during preparation and updating of LEAPs. Project is closely coordinated with relevant officers at Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and at later stage a number of more developed municipalities will be involved (using the regional approach, thus urban municipalities possessing better resources shall act as regional centres for data collection and processing). The project coincides with a complex work on determination of environmental indicators as being envisaged by the European Environmental Agency (EEA) and the process is coordinated with the on-going project activities.

After setting the scope and number of environmental indicators for concerned sectors a software application will be developed, tested and delivered to regional municipal centres. A series of workshops are planned to train local administration on use and maintenance of the software application. The intention is to start with the most critical indicators, to set links with institutions in charge for monitoring of environmental parameters and to allow for future upgrading of the system.

Capacity Building in the field of climate change in the Republic of Serbia

Starting date: September 28, 2007

Finishing date: September 28, 2008

Project budget: EUR 99.300

Beneficiary countries: Serbia

Donor information: Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Norway

Capacity building for different stakeholders, including representatives of central and local governments, businesses, NGOs, media and experts participating in preparation of National Communication is planned to be implemented in the course of the project.

Four activities are planned to be carried out:

- Training for ministerial representatives other than Ministry of Environment,
- Study on possibilities of financing mechanisms,
- Seminar for experts preparing National Communications,
- Training for media persons, journalists.

General knowledge will be increased on climate change related issues among different stakeholders, public awareness will be increased, and quality of National Communications will be improved.

Preparation of the SEE/CCFAP - Climate Change Framework Action Plan for SEE Region

Starting date: September 25, 2007

Finishing date: September 25, 2008

Project budget: EUR 100.850

Beneficiary countries: Serbia

Donor information: Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Norway

The project aim is to prepare a detailed South-East European regional climate change action plan (SEE/CCFAP). Key stakeholders in the region will be supported to develop, in their common interest, programmes and projects with the final aim to support the implementation of Article 5 and Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This project will target stakeholders in South Eastern Europe and involve main relevant central governmental institutions dealing with climate change issues [i.e. ministries dealing with environmental protection of Albania, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, hydro meteorological services, environmental agencies and other institutions dealing with monitoring and reporting, academia, industry etc.] in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Support to the Public Regional Communal Service Company and four Bosnian municipalities (Phase I + II)

Starting date: January 1, 2007

Finishing date: December 31, 2007

Project budget: EUR 350.000

Beneficiary countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donor information: Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Norway

The project aims in giving support in institutional strengthening and capacity building of the Public Regional Communal Service Company, municipal communal service companies and municipalities at the upper stream of Vrbas River (Jajce, Donji Vakuf, Bugojno and Gornji Vakuf - Uskoplje) in order to prepare the Pre-feasibility study. The Pre feasibility study will cover not only waste water infrastructure development, but also needs for future institutional and capacity building and sustainable functioning of the Public Regional Communal Service Company.

Specific goals:

- To assess the current situation in waste water services and to provide recommendations for changes needed in the Public Regional Communal Service Company, municipal communal service companies and municipalities;
- To support the Public Regional Communal Service Company in assessing needs for investment projects development, preparation and management.

The project will try to ensure the cooperation with down stream municipalities of River Vrbas (which are not in direct focus of this project) or at least to offer them know-how and to express necessity of the joint work on sub basin level.

Support to the regional waste management centers in North West Croatia and Eastern Slavonia

Starting date: November 22, 2006

Finishing date: November 22, 2007

Project budget: EUR 350.000

Beneficiary countries: Croatia

Donor information: Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Norway

The waste management sector has been singled out by the European Commission as a sector where approximation to the requirements and practices of the EU would require special attention by the Government of Croatia. The Croatian Waste Management Strategy (WMS) proposes to establish Regional Waste Management Centers (RWMCs) which will be responsible for development and financing of waste management facilities for larger groups of municipalities, on a county, or even wider regional level. Difficulties in establishing RWMCs exist due to lack of: legal forms for establishing the necessary inter-municipal cooperation for future management of RWMCs; agreement on RWMCs locations (in identifying and permitting of sites for RWMCs); human resources and expertise on how to establish and operate future RWMCs; good feasibility studies to support decisions; and financing obstacles.

The main project goal is to contribute to better waste management in two Croatian regions, North West Croatia and Eastern Slavonia, by supporting the establishment of regional waste management centers, and thus, to improve the quality of life of citizens of both regions.

The projects objectives are:

- Institutional strengthening of the two regional public institutions for establishing and managing regional waste management centers;
- Raising public awareness on regional waste management centers;
- Promotion of regional approach to waste management in Croatia.

Support the local environmental planning for the Liqenas and Proger communes of Prespa Lake

Starting date: April 25, 2007

Finishing date: December 31, 2007

Project budget: EUR 20.992

Beneficiary countries: Albania

Donor information: UNDP – Albania

REC Albania will assist two communes on developing LEAPs. The assistance includes Technical support and guidance of the local working groups, mainly focused on the trans-boundary effect of environmental management of Prespa Lake. The activities will consist of establishing working groups, preparation the environmental report (analysis of the environmental status of sub region), organization of public meetings on ER, preparation of the Environmental Strategy (key environmental opportunities and constrains for sustainable development and links to socio-economic and development plans affecting the region), preparation of the Environmental Action Plan (establishing priority environmental policies, actions and investments) and different activities for public awareness and information.

Environmental Planning is considered as the first important and necessary step for the effective Environmental Management of the trans-boundary natural resources and combat the environmental damages inherited for the past. Nowadays each local community is facing many problems as daily priorities: economic, social and

environmental ones. In most of the cases the environmental problems are ranked quite low in the list of priorities thus the level of commitment remains low, too. In addition, the insufficient knowledge on environmental situation compromises the future of these communities in terms of overexploitation and pollution.

This project aims at assisting two communes of Korça Region extended to Prespa Lakes, Liqenas and Proger with establishing the ground for further extension of similar assistance to Bilisht Qender commune. As a document it will seek local needs and try to find best solutions how to use wide natural resources in a sound way on providing local revenues and improving quality of life for the inhabitants.

The purpose of the project is summarized into the following:

- Increase the capacities and skills of local authorities and targeted communities on sustainable use and management of the natural resources in their area
- Establish the ground for future environmental investment in the area aiming at conserving and preserving the natural resources and support the local development and improve the living standard of the population
- Increased capacity of local authorities in the use of local financial and human resources, and
- Increase the chances of fundraising from central government and other potential donors
- Create good examples of local environmental planning for the country

Project is expected to have the following visible results:

- Establish new tools/mechanisms for better cooperation between local authorities and the public
- Establishment of “environmental local advisory boards” to city councils composed by public representative to local authorities
- One LEAP document developed for each of community.

Introduction to European EIA and SEA Legislation

Starting date: June 1, 2007

Finishing date: December 2007

Project budget: EUR 10.494

Beneficiary countries: Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244)

Donor information: Soros Foundation – Kosovo

Main goal of this project is to familiarize the stakeholders in the EIA/SEA process with the EU requirements on EIA and SEA including other relevant international agreements, which will ultimately contribute towards transparent and democratic decision making processes in Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244) whilst respecting, the principles of sustainable development. Moreover the proposed project aims to make this procedure as transparent as possible by familiarizing the municipal authorities with their responsibilities and by informing the public of their rights.

The overall project objective is to increase the transparency, public information and public participation in environmental decision making overall, but especially in the process of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Sustainable Urban Transport Policies in SEE

Starting date: December 1, 2006

Finishing date: November 30, 2007

Project budget: EUR 45.000

Beneficiary countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244), and Turkey

Donor information: Dutch Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing, and Environment (VROM)

The overall objective of this project is to assist the SEE in better understanding of sustainable transport policies and strategies in EU countries and its environmental aspects to assist them in urban transport planning and following of good practises.

The main objectives of this project are as follows:

- To deeper identify the transport problems occurring in SEE countries;
- To provide support to the SEE countries on the tools and ways for integrated urban planning, including economic instruments and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of urban transport and land-use plans;
- To effectively promote environmentally friendly modes of transport;
- To facilitate the debate on sustainable urban transport issues among SEE countries;
- To transfer experience from EU Member States (with particular attention to EU New Member States).

Within this project a Regional Meeting on Sustainable Transport Policies in South Eastern Europe was organised on 21-22 June 2007 in Budapest where the most important problems related to public urban transport in SEE region have been discussed. At the moment 6 case studies on good practise on public transport from New EU Member States are under finalisation and will be presented in a final publication. The website will be established with all information about the project and other relevant information.

Actions in Serbia and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to phase out lead in fuels

Starting date: August 1, 2007

Finishing date: August 1, 2008

Project budget: EUR 52.557

Beneficiary countries: Serbia and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Donor information: UNEP

The project is a part of the common work of REC and the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) in South-Eastern Europe. The project aims at undertaking actions contributing to the lead phase-out in both countries. For Serbia, this will include a blood lead level test for 500 children in Belgrade in order to map the negative effect of lead on human health. Other activities will focus on building the capacities of decision makers, industry and other stakeholders to go through the lead phase-out process. There is also an awareness raising component for the public.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is going unleaded as of January 1st, 2008. Therefore, the project has been adapted to assist the state administration and the public in the process. There will be a detailed assessment of the types and number of vehicles which may face limitations using unleaded petrol. Leaflets will be developed and distributed at gas stations informing drivers how to protect the car engines. The Ministry of Economic Development will also be presented with best practices of air quality gains due to lead phase-out. Pump operators will also be trained as a part of the project.



Priority area 2: Civil Society Support

Accomplished projects

Raising Environmental Consciousness through Environmental Education and Information Programme - GREEN PACK

Starting date: November 01, 2003

Finishing date: March 31, 2007

Project budget: EUR 300.000

Beneficiary countries: Albania

Donor information: Embassy of Netherlands, Tirana

This project developed a set of multimedia curricular materials based on the positive results achieved during the implementation of the REC Green Pack in several countries from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). This version addresses the diversity of environmental challenges Albania is faced with today.

The Albanian Green Pack for school teachers and other educators has a number of interlinking components, including a printed teacher hand book and a CD-ROM with environmental films and computer-based materials. Most of the materials are exclusively in Albanian, with the exception of the CD-ROM, which are bilingual (Albanian and English).

During the two years of work on the Albanian Green Pack, the REC team used the methodology which has been successfully employed in recent Green Pack projects in other CEE countries. Some additional elements were added to the Green Pack methodology to reflect Albania's particular situation, including:

- working with Albanian educational professionals to ensure teaching standards and relevance to national curricula;
- consulting Albanian environmentalists to provide sound and accurate environmental information; and
- using the best worldwide achievements to visualise the educational materials and make them interactive and attractive.

Green Pack: Awareness of Sustainable Development for Schools in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Starting date: Dec. 15, 2005

Finishing date: June 15, 2007

Project budget: EUR 321.000

Beneficiary countries: former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Donor information: Austrian Development Agency (The Macedonian government will contribute EUR 33.248)

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was the next country to get its own Green Pack, the REC's educational toolkit for teachers of environmentally related subjects. The Green Pack, comprising a teacher's guide, CD-ROM, dilemma game, DVD and other instructional materials, gives to junior high aged children and their families a broad background in environmental themes such as environmental components, environmental threats and pressures, human activities impact, values and global challenges.

This project for the first time prepares bilingual country specific product in Macedonian and Albanian language, while CD-ROM are three lingual, developed in Macedonian, Albanian and English language.

Trust Fund for Locally Initiated Environmental Projects

Starting date: October 2003

Finishing date: December 2006

Project budget: EUR 1.000.000

Beneficiary countries: Albania

Donor information: Royal Netherlands Embassy in Tirana

The project Trust Fund for Locally Initiated Environmental Projects supported NGO activities for improving the living environment in local communities, and fostering the cooperation between civil society, local communities, local government and other local institutions.

Approximately, 30 grants have been awarded during the whole project period, resulting in greened areas, better management systems for solid wastes, rehabilitation of public spaces, improved quality of natural resources, involvement of local communities, schools, students, environmental and local experts, and fostering the partnership with local government.

The implementation of grants was supported and monitored by the REC project team through support for NGOs in filling out application forms and meeting eligibility criteria, with individual meetings and joint training for successful, or “winning,” NGOs on project implementation and reporting. The REC project team conducted direct meetings with the beneficiary local government representative, ensuring the transparency of the grants and support for the authorities on the foreseen activities.

The project team followed the grants procedures on the process of announcement, screening and awarding the grants to the NGO. The whole process was carried out through a fair competitive process of evaluation, based on the REC’s long experience on granting and well specified procedures.

The REC established very close contacts and cooperation with other donor organisations, aimed at exchange of information about grants and, where possible, joint funds and efforts for better results, as well as avoiding the duplication of allocated funds. The cooperation with local government institutions on defining and articulating needs and options have been another positive result of this project.

For more information see: <http://albania.rec.org/>

Promotion and Effective Application of the Rights and Responsibilities of the Albanian Population in Environmental Matters

Starting date: December 15, 2005

Finishing date: June 15, 2007

Project budget: EUR 180.000

Beneficiary countries: Albania

Donor information: AECI Spanish Agency for International Cooperation

The project activities included a public awareness campaign, a pilot experience in elaboration and implementation of a plan of action for the protection of the environment in an Albanian municipality, and training for students studying at the Albanian Judicial School in the content and implications of the Aarhus Convention and its protocols.

**Fair and Clean Energy for Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244)
Assistance in preparation of the Forum 2015**

Starting date: November 27, 2006

Finishing date: April 20, 2007

Project budget: EUR 13.238

Beneficiary countries: Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244)

Donor information: Soros Foundation – Kosovo

The overall objective was to inform public with concepts of sustainable use of natural resources, principles of energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well the economic, social and environmental impact of such big undertakings in the sustainable development of the country. Project outputs are the following:

1. Five assessment reports on selected topics (land use- surface and quality of the land to be used for the new mines operations, amount of needed water for power plants capacities; policy and legislation - procedures followed, harmonization with environmental legislation and policies, especially with environmental impact assessment, potential conflicts with UN Framework Convention on Climate Changes and Kyoto Protocol, level of public information and participation; emissions levels- actual level of emissions from existing power plants in the air, soil and water, trends of pollution, limit values of emissions and comparison with EU Directives requirements; geographical area impacted from new mines and new power generations, displacements, of populations and facilities, mapping the impacts; health - incidence of respiratory diseases connected with pollution from existing power generations in the inhabitants of area around the KEK, including the KEK employees in Kosovo A and B, projections for the future based on pollution level;
2. Draft-policy paper for the Forum 2015 discussion- Summary of findings of the Assessment Reports and recommendations for the Forum discussion.

SEA - Capacity building in Albania and Montenegro

Starting date: October 31, 2006

Finishing date: January 31, 2007

Project budget: EUR 15.346

Beneficiary countries: Albania and Montenegro

Donor information: NCEIA Environmental Impact Assessment

REC CO Albania was involved in preparations of workshop programme and materials, along with experts from Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, NCEIA Netherlands, experts for territory planning from UK, World Bank's Project for Integrated Coastal Zone Management. REC CO Albania took care also for organizing the workshop with participants from Albania and Montenegro.

The two day workshop organized in Tirana, in November 2006, gathered forty participants from Albania and Montenegro countries that are both in the process of introducing SEA into their planning practice.

The workshop programme covered SEA basics (what is SEA and how do you do it), several SEA case-studies, and provided the participants with plenty of opportunities to discuss the implications of SEA.

Through a working group exercise the participants developed a list of identified priorities for future SEA activities in both countries.

Current projects

SECTOR: Supporting Environmental Civil Society Organisations in South Eastern Europe

Starting date: April 1, 2006

Finishing date: April 1, 2010

Project budget: EUR 3.699.947

Donor information: The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) together with the REC launched a four-year programme supporting civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Western Balkans. Entitled SECTOR, the programme will help groups working on issues relevant to sustainable development and the urban environment.

The programme is based on a two stage approach: 1) An Inception & Launch Phase and 2) Delivery through three programme components. The Inception Phase (six months) comprised the overall assessment of environmental civil society and preparation and planning of the components. Three main components have been proposed to support the attainment of the programme objectives and fulfil the overall goal of this framework programme. The three main components are: 1) Organisational Viability; 2) Project Support; and 3) Networking Assistance and Training.

The project began on April 11, 2006. After an initial Steering Committee meeting in Belgrade on April 12, the inception phase began. This phase included the further development, scoping and preparation of the three main support components for the full launch in October and involved a comprehensive survey of environmental civil society organisations in the target region.

The assessment survey was based on a questionnaire survey of all groups in the region, a series of stakeholder interviews and gathering of background research. The results of this phase have allowed further tailoring of the programme components and give an up-to-date picture of the status of environmental civil society in the region. The REC has produced a new NGO directory for the region as an output (in English and in national languages, plus online version) and has highlighted the results of the research to the Belgrade Environment for Europe Conference.

The first component on organisational viability is well advanced in the pilot country (Croatia). The methodology of the Organisational Assessment Tool and Organisational Development Plans (OAT/ODP) is settled and some ten CSOs have undertaken the Organisational Assessment process. The next stage of support to implementation of the ODPs was decided in October 2007. The other countries involved are now tailoring the OAT/ODP to the national conditions and will launch the programme in their countries. The first round of national and regional grants was decided in April 2007. Some 38 national grants were awarded with EUR 353,603 of support and 5 regional grants with EUR 185,327 of support. National projects will run for 12 months and regional for 18 months. The second round will be launched in October 2007. The networking and training component is now in the final drafting stages and the training are foreseen to be carried out through 2008.

New projects

Beyond piloting the Green Pack Albania in basic education system

Starting date: July 12, 2007

Finishing date: March 2010

Project budget: EUR 170.000

Beneficiary countries: Albania

Donor information: Ministry of Environment – Italy

This project focuses on the provision of education for sustainable development courses and curricula to support the transfer of skills and knowledge to school system in Albania. REC is actively engaged in the field of education for environment and SD, especially focusing on environmental education on basic education system and promoting public awareness. Education is considered a crucial tool to support environmental and sustainable development policies, aiming at promoting public consciousness of environmental matters and behaviours' in harmony with the nature and human beings.

This environmental education programme consists of two phases:

- Develop and introduce the "Environmental education" curricula as subject in the Universities preparing teachers
- Establishment of Training/Qualification course of teachers assigned for Environmental Education subject.

Expected results of this programme are:

- Reformation of the university curricula by introducing specific subject on education for sustainable development
- Reorienting education towards sustainable development and increasing public awareness, through implementing environmental education at University level
- Increase the capacity of university staff to develop and deliver comprehensive state-wide environmental education programs
- Environmental education topics/curricula incorporated into university curricula;
- Establishment of multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnership on env. education issues in Albania
- Establish and support of National Expert Network on Environmental Education
- Promote research and evaluation that assesses the effectiveness of environmental education in improving environmental quality and student achievement.
- Improve the quality, access, and coordination of environmental education information, resources, and programs.
- Promoting integration of environmental education with other school subject of national programme.

Public awareness raising for development tourism in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Starting date: September 15, 2007

Finishing date: March 15, 2008

Project budget: EUR 10.226

Beneficiary countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donor information: Ministry of Environment – Bosnia and Herzegovina

The project goal is to raise awareness of natural values in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) of schoolchildren age 7 to 11. The project main activity is production of brochure with short instructions on where and how to organize a visit to natural values of FBiH.

The main activity is divided in four components:

- Determination of the most important sites in FBiH where natural values can be presented and its protection and environmental friendly activities can be promoted,
- Development of instructions with suggested programs for one day study tours for each site,
- Design and print of brochure and the promotion of brochure.

The REC Bosnia and Herzegovina will identify the most important and the most interesting sites that can be used for educational tours of elementary school children. Development of brochure will follow. The brochure will contain basic instruction to study tour organiser with specifics on important issues such as, what and when to pay special attention to, recommendations on group selection and certain preparations for the better organisation of the study tour. The brochure will contain clear instruction when and how to visit the sites with giving basic characteristics of each. The brochure will be disseminated to the elementary schools, non-governmental

organisations and others interested in organising study tours. A public event will be organised to promote the brochure. Representatives of schools, resource ministries, non-governmental organisations and media will be invited for this occasion.

Partnership for Environment in Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244)

Starting date: January 1, 2007

Finishing date: June 1, 2008

Project budget: EUR 50.772

Beneficiary countries: Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244)

Donor information: European Agency for Reconstruction Kosovo

The overall objective of this project is to support building of democratic and transparent institutions through strengthening and mobilizing environmental civil society organizations (CSOs), improving cooperation with government and improving the social dialogue, with the aim of contributing towards reaching better environmental solutions and making better environmental decisions based on sustainable development and as a result of a wide consultation and agreement process.

The proposed project is an action comprising three main components which complement each other in a fulfilling way. The first component is be: Establishing the foundation for formal and official cooperation between MESP and environmental CSOs, the second component is Capacity Building for Governmental Officials, environmental CSOs and industry whereas the third component focuses on information of civil society organizations and public in general about the project activities and the possibilities this project would offer to them for voicing their environmental concerns.

Sustainable Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244) - Raising environmental awareness through a critical, vital and multi-ethnic environmental movement

Starting date: June, 2007

Finishing date: December, 2009

Project budget: EUR 165.419

Beneficiary countries: Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244)

Donor information: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MATRA, Programme for social transformation

The project goal is to provide environmental NGOs in Kosovo with sufficient, adequate and relevant training to create a vital, critical and cooperative environmental movement in Kosovo, capable of contributing to socio-economic reconstruction and design of development plans into an environmentally sound direction. As a sub goal or precondition, this calls for due attention to public awareness raising as well as for promoting cooperation among NGOs, and between NGOs and governmental institutions involved in environmental policy development and environmental protection.

Related to this, the objectives to which this project aims to contribute are

- Increased capacity and knowledge of Kosovo environmental NGOs to effectively influence and lobby the (Kosovo and international) authorities and raise public awareness on environmental issues;
- Increased environmental awareness of the general public, including wider coverage of environmental issues by the Kosovar media;
- Increased cooperation amongst the environmental NGOs in Kosovo, with partner organisations in neighbouring countries and with Kosovo environmental governmental institutions.

Translated in activities, this project will focus strongly on capacity building through various training activities.



Priority area 3: Regional and Cross-border Cooperation

Accomplished projects

Transboundary cooperation through the management of shared natural resources

Starting date: March 2004

Finishing date: February 2007

Project budget: EUR 1.270.000 (phase 3)

Beneficiary countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia

Donor information: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

The third phase of the project “Transboundary cooperation through the management of shared natural resources” was successfully accomplished at the end of February 2007. The project was implemented in three cross-border sites: Neretva Delta (Croatia/Bosnia and Herzegovina), Skadar Lake (Montenegro/Albania) and West Stara Planina (Bulgaria/Serbia).

The key project outcomes could be summarised as follows:

- Lines of communication among institutions and between countries were restored
- Local democracy was strengthened through the introduction of participatory processes
- Operational cross-border cooperation mechanisms were established
- Trans-boundary cooperation is now supported by official cross-border agreements and the commitment of national and local governments
- The conservation of shared natural ecosystems benefits from new protected areas
- Local communities benefit from concrete cross-border products that also bring new development alternatives
- Local communities benefit from having their strategic development directions identified and assessed
- Local stakeholders benefit from new knowledge and experience and lessons from other similar areas
- The management of shared natural resources is better ensured through improved multi-stakeholder dialogue and improved capacities of resource management bodies
- Countries involved made progress towards stability and European integration

More information on the project could be found in the publication “Trans-Boundary Cooperation Through the Management of Shared Natural Resources: Experience and lessons from six years of work in three pilot areas: the Neretva Delta, Skadar/Shkodra Lake and West Stara Planina” available on the web site of the REC. Within the project were also published “Directions for developing sustainable agriculture in Serbian municipalities of West Stara Planina” which are also available on REC website.

Achievements of the project serve as a strong basis for continued intervention in the three cross-border sites, following several directions. Realising that trans-boundary forums – as the mechanisms for trans-boundary stakeholder cooperation – represent the core competence of the project, strengthening them, and engaging members in identifying viable options for the long-term functioning of the forums has been selected as one of the main directions. The last phase of the project, to be implemented between March 2007 and December 2008 will

exclusively support further efforts in this respect (details are given under new cross-border projects “Neretva Delta, Skadar/Shkodra Lake, West Stara Planina - Follow-up 2007 & 2008”).

In line with priorities identified by the project and local stakeholders additional funding will be explored to support the implementation of larger scale local initiatives in the fields of tourism, agriculture, water management, environmental education and environmental investments. Additionally, future efforts will seek to support the development of harmonised management approaches for newly established protected areas and transfer the experiences of the project to other potential cross-border sites.

Current projects

Cross Border Cooperation through Environmental Investment and Planning

Starting date: December 2004

Finishing date: December 2007

Project budget: 668.135 EUR

Beneficiary countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia

Donor information: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The project Cross Border Cooperation through Environmental Investment and Planning operated in three cross-border sites in the SEE region:

- Site 1 – Zvornik, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mali Zvornik, Serbia
- Site 2 – Debar, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Peshkopia, Albania
- Site 3 – Bileca, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Niksic, Montenegro

The priority environmental problems identified at the three sites concentrate on water supply, and the collection and discharge of wastewater. Solving these environmental problems through implementation of carefully planned investments is a high priority for the local communities.

The feasibility assessment of the four investments for water resources quality improvement was completed by the end 2006. Workshops for key stakeholder working groups aiming to present the key results of the feasibility studies were organised in October – December 2006 at each site. The investments were also presented to the wider community which will be directly affected by the investment implementation. These events served as opportunity to collect stakeholders’ comments on issues such as new tariff structure, quality of the service, location of the infrastructure, etc. and the feedback was taken into consideration in the final versions of the feasibility studies.

Additional training was organized for the stakeholders as well as for other municipalities from the SEE. The training included topics like tariff setting, reforming and restructuring the utilities, alternative/innovative technologies in the water sector. It was organized back-to-back with the final financing conference in September 2007 which aimed to highlight the key results of the project, achievements and lessons learned as well as actions for the future.

Key achievements of the project are as follows:

- Four international standard feasibility studies were prepared by teams of local consultants under the guidance of the REC project team. The investments consist of three components focused on water resources protection (water supply efficiency improvement, reduction of pollution caused by discharge of wastewater and institutional strengthening of the utility);

- Participatory approach was applied during project implementation involving actively the local stakeholders and community from the early stages of project design;
- Training program developed by the REC for local consultants in feasibility analysis methodology, tools and contents was a key for successful planning effort;
- It was acknowledged that the capacity of the local authorities to identify, develop and prepare environmental investment projects was significantly improved as a result of the workshops and training provided;
- The REC project team communicated the investment projects with representatives of financing institutions and national authorities aiming to assist the beneficiaries in identifying viable financing options for the investments. Such were identified for two of the projects and efforts continue for the other two investments.
- The need for technical assistance at local level in the SEE is significant and it was highlighted that the project methodology and approach can be replicated in other municipalities especially in rural and cross-border areas.

Cross-Border LEAPs: Environmental Planning for Peace and Stability

Starting date: December 2005

Finishing date: May 2008

Project budget: EUR 749.150

Beneficiary countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro

Donor information: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

The project “Cross-Border LEAPs: Environmental Planning for Peace and Stability” introduced LEAP methodology to four communities in the cross-border region of the Drina River between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia (Priboj, Rudo, Bratunac and Ljubovija). It will be completed by the end of May 2008.

The general objective of the project is to improve, through LEAPs, peace and stability in region. The specific objectives include opening channels of communication across national borders, improving the capacity of local authorities to manage their environmental problems through effective planning, developing a model for cross-border, participatory local environmental planning, and improving the overall state of environment in selected cross-border communities. LEAPs are prepared in four beneficiary municipalities, while the selected local priority investment actions will be undertaken in 2008.

New projects

Neretva Delta, Skadar/Shkodra Lake, West Stara Planina - Follow-up 2007 & 2008

Starting date: March 01, 2007 / April 5, 2007

Finishing date: December 31, 2007 / February 28, 2008

Project budget: EUR 263.909, phase 4, 1st year

Beneficiary countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia

Donor information: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC

The project Trans-boundary Cooperation through the Management of Shared Natural Resources operates in three cross-border sites in South Eastern Europe: Neretva Delta, between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Skadar/Shkodra Lake between Albania and Montenegro, and West Stara Planina, between Bulgaria and Serbia. The fourth project phase covers the period 2007-2008 with main emphasis on ensuring sustainability of the project’s results.

Institutional ground for long-term trans-boundary cooperation for the management of shared natural resources in the Neretva Delta Region is one of the main expected outcomes of the project activities. Facilitation of processes and activities in the trans-boundary Neretva Delta Forum will continuously be implemented.

Transboundary Skadar/Shkodra Lake Forum's main activities will be focused on the Forum of Shkodra Lake facilitation, organizational infrastructure and capacity building and mainly towards implementing the forum mandate definition as a sustainable working body for the further orientation.

The Euroregion "Stara Planina" between Bulgaria and Serbia was established in June 2006 (in line with requirements of the Council of Europe), as a cross-border body with its mandate to facilitate cross-border cooperation of communities. In 2007, further institutionalization of Euroregion Stara Planina is taking place. The period was marked with the integration of Euroregion Stara Planina in the European structures through its approval as full member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the partnerships established with Euroregia between Slovenia and Austria and AEBR management and members.



Priority area 4: Reducing Environmental Health Threats and Loss of Biodiversity

Accomplished Projects

Impact of Municipal Waste Water on River Vrbas

Starting date: January 2006

Finishing date: June 2007

Project budget: EUR 135.500

Beneficiary country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donor information: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway

The main goal of the project was to define impact of urban waste waters from three urban areas located on Vrbas River and to offer possible modalities on how communities might decrease negative impact in future. Project collected data regarding waste water influence on the river through systematic analyses of exiting data and provided sampling of water from the river and waste water. Besides water-management related data, analyses made a comprehensive overview of the situation, taking in account data related to urban planning, demographic status, economy within the micro-region, overall development plans etc. Updated and upgraded data base was the starting point for preparation of Activity Plan, aimed to suggest next steps towards reducing of the negative impact. Activity plan was offered to local stakeholders on their further elaboration and use. Special attention was paid on possibilities for infrastructure investment.

Publication “Impact of Municipal Waste waters on Vrbas River” was prepared.

In summary the project:

1. Identified of main sources, quantity and quality of wastewater from three urban areas;
2. Assessed of River Vrbas water quality and wastewater quality in three pilot areas;
3. Drafted possible model for development of sewerage systems;
4. Proposed possible locations and technological procedure for wastewater treatment installation;
5. Proposed guidelines for development of future action plans, submitted to local authorities;
6. Disseminated of information and project results in order to raise public awareness on impact of municipal wastewater on the River Vrbas;
7. Strengthened public involvement in the process of solving of environmental problems;
8. Assessed the applicability of WFD in the Vrbas River Basin area.

Preparation of Action Plans for the remediation of three heavily polluted areas (hot spots)

Starting date: January 24, 2007

Finishing date: October 31, 2007

Project budget: EUR 122.914

Beneficiary countries: Serbia

Donor information: European Agency for Reconstruction

The general scope of the work was to identify and assess historically polluted sites and rank them in terms of the threat that they pose for further significant pollution of the surface and ground waters, and the consequent

degradation of public health and the surrounding environment Based upon that ranking and other considerations (including but not limited to potential remediation cost, diversity of types of pollution, location and practicality), to propose a short-list of sites for which comprehensive plans will be prepared for the remediation of the pollution potential through clean-up or risk reduction. To undertake small-scale pilot studies to prove the validity of proposed remediation schemes.

The analysed historically polluted sites are located within the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia (excluding Kosovo, as defined by the UNSCR 1244). The selected seriously polluted sites ('hot-spots') are the Municipal Landfill "Vinca", Toluene Spill in Baric and Zinc Tailings inside the chemical complex "Zorka - Obojena Metalurgija" in Šabac.

New projects

Preparation of Project Documentation for Construction of Sewage Systems and Wastewater Treatment

Starting date: October, 2007

Finishing date: December, 2008

Project budget: EUR 140.518

Beneficiary countries: former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Donor information: Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

The main goal of the project is to prepare a Feasibility Study for the municipal area (23 settlements), as well as preliminary and detailed design on sewerage systems with wastewater treatment plants for four priority villages along the Treska River before it enters the Vardar River in Skopje. The specific objectives are to assist the municipality in project preparation aiming at setting a sound base for funding of the investment project. In addition, the institutional issues concerning assessing needs for strengthening of capacities of the future operator of the sewerage and waste water treatment plant systems are tackled as well.

Additional Services for Support to Water Quality Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Starting date: September 1, 2007

Finishing date: August 31, 2008

Project budget: EUR 87.250

Beneficiary country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donor information: European Commission

The overall objective of the project is to ensure the protection, improvement and the rational use of water resources according to EU standards and requirements using integrated water management principles according to Water Framework Directive, contributing therefore to the reform of the water sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The purpose of this contract is to support the water sector institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina in reaching a "good water status", as defined in the Water Framework Directive.

The following two results are expected to be achieved by the Contract:

- Component 1 – The continuation of the EC-initiated institutional strengthening of the water sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina ensured by focusing on the further development of the water management process.
- Component 2 – Availability of quality environmental investment projects for IFI financing increased through improved project preparation capacities of Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities and improved cooperation with IFIs.

Healthcare Waste Training System in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Starting date: March 01, 2007

Finishing date: March 01, 2008

Project budget: EUR 51.706

Beneficiary countries: former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Donor information: DEFRA – UK Environment for Europe Fund

The project is aiming at set up of a pilot training system on healthcare waste (HCW) management for the Macedonian healthcare and environmental sectors. A " Draft Regulation on the Manner of Handling Medical Waste, Labeling and Forms for Handling Medical Waste and on Types of Medical Waste whose Processing is Prohibited" in accordance to the new Law for waste was prepared by both Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and Ministry of Health. It is a practical tool for monitoring of medical waste stream and for ensuring that the medical waste is treated according the Law for waste. The training will enable the healthcare sector to efficiently implement the new legislation. The project also foresees a pilot activity in one healthcare organization chosen after the delivering of the training that will enable preparation of gap analysis.

Protection of priority Wetlands for Bird Migrations in the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion - "Sharing Waters"

Starting date: February 12, 2007

Finishing date: January 31, 2010

Project budget: EUR 17.300

Beneficiary countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donor information: WWF Mediterranean Programme

REC Bosnia and Herzegovina and World Wide Fund Mediterranean Programme Office (WWF MedPO) signed a contract for the implementation of the project "Sharing waters" in Neretva river basin. The project will be implemented through REC office in Mostar. The aim of the project is to be more successful in preserving the priority wetlands in the Dinaric Arc Region by addressing the site preservation in connection with the river basin management.

The project goal is to have stable water quantity in the marshes of the lower Neretva valley. This will be achieved by building capacity of civil society to minimize impact of existing and future infrastructure systems in the Neretva basin. Alternative options to future hydropower dams and existing ones will be proposed to decision makers. Also, support of local communities, research institutions, and other relevant stakeholders against unsustainable development of water infrastructures in upper Neretva river basin is planned to be gained. Local NGOs will be trained to have the capacity to run communication and advocacy campaigns in the basin.

Increased biodiversity protection and coastal conservation in Kornati archipelago, Croatia

Starting date: January 25, 2007

Finishing date: March 31, 2008

Project budget: EUR 12.010

Beneficiary countries: Croatia

Donor information: Wageningen University

Project is aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity in Croatia's coastal and island zones which are under heavy threat of (mass) tourism developments. Immediate objective is to increase the capacity and strengthen the position of local protection authorities and biodiversity protection NGOs, as well as to raise awareness of the public and visitors concerning the need to actively preserve the biodiversity in the Kornati archipelago.

The expected outcomes of the project will be:

- increased knowledge, experience and skills of the National Park staff and local NGOs for improved biodiversity protection,
- international relations established to EU and Mediterranean initiatives for marine biodiversity protection,
- Kornati NP well-positioned as prospective part of Natura 2000 network,
- strengthened position of NP vis-a-vis economically driven tourism developments in the region,
- local NGOs becoming partners of protection authorities and able to lobby stronger for nature protection,
- strategic action plan for increased biodiversity and habitat protection prepared, presented and accepted, at least at municipal level, as framework for policy development,
- biodiversity and habitat protection higher on the political agenda,
- increased awareness of citizens and visitors of the need for stronger protection of Kornati archipelago,
- solid waste hot-spots in the region cleaned up
- methods of field verification of *Posidonia oceanica* habitats and early warning against invasive algae *Caulerpa taxifolia* developed.