



**Interim Narrative Project Report on the project  
"Development of environmental NGOs electronic networking in Bulgaria" 2004**

BlueLink Foundation, Bulgaria

**Name of the project:** "Development of Environmental NGOs Electronic Networking in Bulgaria" 2004

**Project Manager:** Milena Georgieva

**Project Period:** 1 April 2004 – 31 December 2004

This Interim Narrative Project Report covers the activities conducted by BlueLink Information Network on the project "Development of environmental NGOs electronic networking in Bulgaria" 2004, funded by The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe, for the period **1 April 2004 – 31 October 2004**.

**Activities planned:**

**A: Content services and information maintenance and upgrade**

Development and adaptation of different APC ActionApps-based content services; News Service ; Events Calendar; Announcements; Links collection system; Mailing Lists; Applications setting and development ; Maintenance and development of thematic websites

**B: NGO Collaboration: Platform/tool for NGO elections**

**C: NGO Meetings**

Elections working group meeting; BlueLink NGO Steering Group meeting

**D: International and regional cooperation**

**Activities conducted:**

**A: Content services and information maintenance and upgrade**

1. *Development and adaptation of different APC ActionApps-based content services:* BlueLink's web site was innovated and upgraded. The structure was improved and a new design (see annex 1) was developed in order to offer more user-friendly navigation and presentation of the BlueLink's website content. The new structure improved and added to the functionality of BlueLink's web site on <http://www.bluelink.net>. The expected results were achieved as following: updated portal site, with database driven, constantly updated content, organised by categories, fully searchable, easy to navigate, interactive, allowing and inviting active NGO user's input. The main tool for the website development was the Action Applications toolkit of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC).

The renovation of the BlueLink's website got positive feedback from many NGOs and users and strengthened the content and information flow (see annex 2: Web statistics).

2. *News Service:* Around 280 articles in Bulgarian and 74 in English were published on the news section of BlueLink site for the period January 2004 – November 2004. The news covered the activities and the development of the Bulgarian environmental organizations and general important environmental information.

3. *Environmental News Monitor* – An electronic form for news digest is available on BlueLink's web site. The users are able to subscribe and receive the news directly in their e-mail daily, weekly or monthly. There are more than 190 subscribers for the digest. Their number increased more than twice during the project year 2004.



4. *Events Calendar:* BlueLink has supported and updated a section for the upcoming events (developed by using APC AA free software) <http://www.bluelink.net/kalendar/en/>. During the reported period more than 100 events were announced through the event calendar. The order of the events is chronological and after the period of the event is over the announcement automatically goes out from the calendar. Through an open form the NGO users could add by themselves the events they organize (<http://www.bluelink.net/kalendar/en/form.shtml>). The form is user-friendly and simple to fill in. When a new event is submitted, BlueLink's editor is notified by e-mail to check and approve the new item.

5. *Announcements:* on the BlueLink's website NGO users have the possibility to announce their initiatives, actions or open job position both through the events calendar open form or through sending e-mail with the announcement to be published in the *News* section on BlueLink's website.

6. *Links collection system:* BlueLink has supported and updated the Links Directory, which contains over 300 links in 27 categories.

7. *Mailing Lists:* The subscribers in the largest mailing list ([ngos@bluelink.net](mailto:ngos@bluelink.net)) are 260 users coming from NGOs, mass media, academic institutions, municipal and state authorities and individuals. BlueLink supports 56 mailing lists 10 of which were created during the project period.

8. *Applications setting and development:* BlueLink's web portal structure and sections were revised in order to ensure better information services to the NGOs and to meet the growing need for a more elaborated civil environmental database. The development and management of BlueLink's web portal was closely related with the optimised development and utilisation of APC's Action Applications for facilitating and automating content generation, publishing and sharing.

9. *Maintenance and development of thematic websites:* BlueLink continued to develop and support the NGO node of Bulgarian CHM on biodiversity ([www.bluelink.net/chm](http://www.bluelink.net/chm)) and the web portal on Climate Change issues ([www.bluelink.net/climate](http://www.bluelink.net/climate)).

9.1. *Campaigns:* BlueLink reflects all the important campaigns, events and actions of NGOs, connected with environmental protection. During the project period BlueLink updated and further developed with recent news the webpage on genetically modified organisms (GMO) ([www.bluelink.net/gmo](http://www.bluelink.net/gmo)). The website was following and reflecting the NGO campaign for improvement of the new law, which allows GMO in Bulgaria. BlueLink prepared a special website for the NGO campaign *NO to nuclear power plant (NNP) Belene* ([www.bluelink.net/belene](http://www.bluelink.net/belene)). Not only Bulgarian, but also Greenpeace, WISE and many other international NGOs follow and support the campaign.

All the above mentioned thematic websites have also English versions.

The campaigns were also reflected on the regional content sharing platform [www.see-environment.info](http://www.see-environment.info).

## **B: NGO Collaboration: Platform/tool for NGO elections**

BlueLink developed the structure and the different functionalities of the platform for NGO elections. The platform implementation and the trial processes are going to be finalized by the end of December 2004 (See annex 3). The NGO election platform will be presented to the NGOs by the end of 2004.

During the project period BlueLink successfully conducted one on-line election campaign requested by the Ministry of Environment and Waters for two NGO representatives at the Working Group for development of operating program "Environment 2007-2013".



## C: NGO Meetings

*1. Elections working group meeting.* In order to serve the NGO community more comprehensively and efficiently, BlueLink involved different organisations in an Elections working group. The organisations that had expressed interest to contribute and participate in the Elections working group were invited to a meeting in March 2004. This NGO group was following the process of development of the NGO election platform from the very beginning. The working group gave comments, specified the principles and agreed on the structure of the e-tool.

Another meeting is planned for December 2004. BlueLink will present its detailed technical concept on the NGO Election platform, and will get direct feedback and comments from NGOs.

*2. BlueLink NGO Steering Group meeting.* The meeting of the Steering Group was organised on 3 April 2004 in Bankya. BlueLink received positive evaluations of its services from the founders and the direct beneficiaries – the environmental NGOs. The Steering Group meeting helped the BlueLink team to fine-tune and adapt its activities in accordance with the needs of our users, as recognised and expressed by them and to improve and develop new online services.

## D: International and regional cooperation

BlueLink continued to connect further Bulgarian environmental NGOs with e-networks and NGOs from South East Europe (SEE), as well as with the global civil society movement through APC. BlueLink promoted electronic networking among environmental NGOs in the SEE region by active participation in regional meetings on electronic networking; by providing on-going consultancy and counselling to NGO young e-networks; continuing support for NGO networks in countries where BlueLink has been previously involved.

### *1. Participation in the Stockholm Challenge Final Event*

BlueLink participated in the Stockholm Challenge Best Practice exhibition (11-14 May 2004). Best IT pioneers from all over the world exchanged ideas and experience on IT use for networking, information exchange and community consolidation. The nominated examples of IT solutions were presented in 6 finalist categories: e-Government, Culture, Health, Education, e-Business and Environment. BlueLink presented the regional platform [www.see-environment.info](http://www.see-environment.info), through which NGOs from SEE region exchange environmental information and use as a tool to improve the access to information on a regional level. The cooperation initiative for information exchange was the one of the 9 finalists in the category "Environment" after a severe competition with over 900 applicants for the annual awards and the only finalist from the Balkan region. The project received high appreciation and positive feedback from the participants in the event.

### *2. Participation in the Second (26-27 January 2004) and in the Third (1-2 July 2004) Task force meeting on electronic tools in Geneva*

BlueLink participated actively in the both meetings presenting the regional cooperation between environmental NGO networks and the exchange of information through the regional content sharing platform [www.see-environment.info](http://www.see-environment.info). There was a serious interest from the participants on the activities and the possibilities of the NGO networks in the SEE region. The content sharing platform [www.see-environment.info](http://www.see-environment.info) was included in the resources of Aarhus clearinghouse (<http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org>), which was launched by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to highlight and promote awareness of issues covered by the Aarhus Convention. After the meetings BlueLink informed on the results the partners' networks from SEE region by publishing articles on [www.see-environment.info](http://www.see-environment.info).

### *3. Supporting the regional content sharing platform.*

BlueLink managed to raise some additional funds to support the regional content sharing platform [www.see-environment.info](http://www.see-environment.info) and some of the NGO networks in SEE.

Annex 1

New site [www.bluelink.net](http://www.bluelink.net) in Bulgarian:



New site [www.bluelink.net](http://www.bluelink.net) in English:



**BlueLink Information Network - Bulgaria established in 1998 by:** Public Environmental Centre of Sustainable Development - Varna, Environmental Club "Terra" - Blagoevgrad, Bulgarian Biodiversity Preservation Society Semperviva - Pernik, Academica Geo Eco Club – Veliko Tarnovo, Green Balkans - Sofia, For the Earth, Centre for Environmental Information and Education and ECO-CLUB 2000. BlueLink aims to create a free information forum for democracy, civil society, sustainable development and harmony with nature.

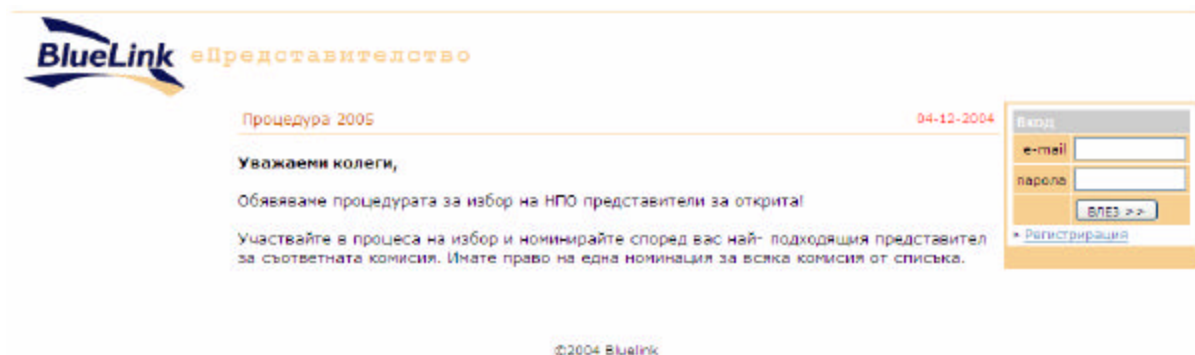
**Annex 2**

Usage Statistics for [www.bluelink.net](http://www.bluelink.net) :

Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
<a href="#">Nov 2004</a>	12252	9586	1714	521	7676	2532339	15653	51425	287601	367566
<a href="#">Oct 2004</a>	9786	7636	1514	458	6757	2026806	14227	46944	236716	303396

**Annex 3**

Draft of the Platform for NGO elections:



The screenshot shows the BlueLink e-representative platform interface. At the top left is the BlueLink logo and the text "eПредставителство". The main content area features the title "Процедура 2005" with a date "04-12-2004" to its right. Below the title, there is a salutation "Уважаеми колеги," followed by the announcement: "Обявяваме процедурата за избор на НПО представители за открита!" and "Участвайте в процеса на избор и номинирайте според вас най- подходящия представител за съответната комисия. Имате право на една номинация за всяка комисия от списъка." On the right side of the page, there is a registration form with fields for "e-mail" and "парола", a "ВЛЪЗ >>>" button, and a link for "Регистрация". At the bottom center, there is a copyright notice "©2004 Bluelink".