



THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
for Central and Eastern Europe

Call for Letters of Interest to Participate, Establish or Develop Environmental NGO Electronic Networks in South East European Countries

With the Support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe hereby announces a Call for Expression of Interest.

THE GOAL: ELECTRONIC NETWORKING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is looking for the expression of interest of non governmental organizations (NGOs) or NGO coalitions to participate, establish or strengthen national NGO coalitions to run NGO electronic information networks in the countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE). The goal of supporting electronic NGO networks is to foster a more powerful and more effective environmental NGO community, encourage co-operation, mutual trust and information exchange among NGOs, and thus contribute to the strengthening of civil society in SEE countries. The project will also aim to further develop regional electronic networking.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

The purposes of this call for expression of interest is to identify environmental NGOs or NGO coalitions that would potentially be interested in contributing, participating or developing a national electronic network. The Letter of Interest should demonstrate your interest to:

- participate, develop or contribute to environmental NGO electronic networks in your country and South Eastern Europe;
- co-operate with as many NGOs in your country as possible, by sharing information, knowledge, skills and resources. Please indicate the type of information/resource your organization may be able to share with other NGOs;
- set up and follow clear democratic procedures for operating and developing an NGO network; plan, manage and account a co-operative project in a transparent and democratic way.

With this call we would like to kick-off the process of setting up or development of an environmental NGO electronic network in your country.

NETWORKING NATIONALLY AND REGIONALLY - THE REReP PROCESS

South East European environmental NGO electronic networks will be supported within the framework of the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Program for South Eastern Europe (REReP). The REReP process represents the environmental component of the South East European Stability Pact, Working Table II. on economic reconstruction. For more information please visit the Web Site at <http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REReP/>.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR

As part of project start-up activities a series of representative interviews/questionnaire surveys were conducted. These assessed the current status and needs of environmental NGOs to develop electronic networks in the SEE countries. Based on this information a Needs Assessment document was compiled that explores the current situation in each beneficiary country and gives recommendations for the project. The whole document will be available on the Internet at http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/SEE_Networking/.

To increase the transparency and quality of the project a project an NGO Steering Committee was set up for the project. The Steering Committee monitors and guides project activities. Members in the Committee are representatives from NGO network coalitions or are national NGO representatives (when there is no network in the country yet).

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Building on the results of the needs assessment survey, the REC (its Head Office and Country Offices) will offer facilitation, consultancy, expertise as well as technical and financial assistance to the development of the networks in each SEE country. The REC will also support international cooperation among these networks.

Networks are envisaged to be run by NGO coalitions. Such coalitions are expected to be an effective means to foster co-operation among different NGOs, function openly and transparently to the whole NGO community, and be driven by the needs and demands of the NGO community that they serve.

The REC will organize project steering committee meetings, national and regional training and networking workshops, and other activities according to the work plan and the specific NGO needs in each SEE country.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Only NGOs from the beneficiary countries of the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South East Europe are eligible to submit their letters of expression of interest. Beneficiary countries and entities are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, FYR Macedonia, Romania and UN Entity Kosovo. Partnerships with other European networks and organizations are possible, but only the listed beneficiaries are eligible for support under this project.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE PROJECT

The following items are foreseen as the basic principles for the successful implementation of the SEE Environmental NGO Electronic Networking Project:

- **Co-operation, democratic procedures and transparency**
Only NGO coalitions will be considered to run networks. Such coalitions should demonstrate a good level of cooperation and potential for partnership. Self-sustainability of the networks will be aimed for (that is, coalitions that remain functional even after the end of this project.)
- **Information exchange and capacity building**
The main focus of work will be on the establishment/development of electronic information networks, bringing NGOs together to share information, raise their capacity to use modern information technologies, and engage in international cooperation with other NGO networks. The primary focus should not be on technical issues.
- **Form national to regional networks in South Eastern Europe**
This project will be performed in each South Eastern European country. Since this project is part of the international REReP process, the project also includes a regional (cross-border) co-operative component. Therefore your network is encouraged to see how you can contribute to helping other networks, or how they can help you.

HOW TO SEND A LETTER OF INTEREST

1. Please send a one or two page letter by e-mail, fax or regular post to the project's national coordinator. (Detailed addresses on the project Home Page at http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/SEE_Networking/

2. Optionally, you can also send your letter of interest *in English* to the international project team at the REC Head Office (in this case please send a copy to your country's representative as well):

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WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU SENT YOUR LETTER OF INTEREST?

1. By expressing interest, NGOs and NGO coalitions will be invited to join and play an active role in further project activities: creation, development and strengthening of NGO information networks.

2. As one of the first project activities, senders of the letters of interest will be invited to a national project planning workshop/training seminar, to be held around October 2001. The meeting will be devoted to Internet/networking training as well as to project planning. The results of project start-up activities will be reviewed here (primarily the results of a needs assessment survey) as well as the next steps will be discussed. Detailed agenda will be mailed out before the seminar.

3. Besides an invitation to the kick-off meeting of the project, senders will be included in the project mailing list and will be kept informed about future project activities.