
SEE NGO ELECTRONIC NETWORKING

PROJECT IN KOSOVO/A

FINAL NARRATIVE AND FINANCIAL REPORT
JANUARY 2002 – MARCH 2003

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for Central and Eastern Europe
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SEE NGO ELECTRONIC NETWORK: PROJECT IN KOSOVO/A

The main goal of the REReP 2.3 “SEE NGO Electronic Networking” project for the SEE region and also in Kosovo/a is a stronger, better organized and coordinated environmental NGO community. One step towards this is the creation of a national electronic network among environmental NGOs.

PROGRES MADE IN THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2002 – MARCH 31, 2003

The implementation of the project started in January 2002 and the steps taken in order to implement the project are described chronologically. For the year 2002, the envisioned project activities were planned in accordance with the needs of the local environmental NGOs. The workplan for the year 2002 till March 2003 consists of 6 components:

1. First 2,5 day Introductory Workshop for environmental NGOs on electronic networking
2. Active and ongoing information exchange
3. Second 2,5 day Workshop for environmental NGOs on more advanced tools for electronic networking
4. The “Environmental NGO Room ”
5. Activities organized by the NGO Working Group on electronic networking
6. Transport and distribution of 14 donated second-hand computers to environmental NGOs

First 2,5 day Introductory Workshop

First 2,5 day Introductory Workshop was held on January 18-20, 2002, in Prishtina. This workshop was organized together with a facilitator from BlueLink and the REC HO project management. Copy of the Workshop’s agenda can be found in Annex 2.

The first two days of the workshop were held in “DORA” Restaurant, which included, among other issues, the theoretical approach to networking, avoiding cons and obstacles of electronic networking among Kosovar environmental NGOs and a fruitful discussion on how the Kosovar environmental NGOs could start their own electronic network. A Working Group was established on the spot. The evaluation forms from the participants showed that this was a successful approach. The third day was organized in “Premium” Internet Café, where 21 computers were available for the practical part of the workshop. This part included explanations about APC’s software, BlueLink’s website and also a presentation of the local NGOs websites (so far only one, <http://www.kosecologists.org>). Gabor Heves, International Project Manager, gave a lesson on how to prepare proper web content. Copy of the Workshop’s participants list can be found in Annex 3.

The results of the workshop were positive. This can be said based on the creation of the NGO Working Group made up from all relevant environmental NGOs from Kosovo/a. The first meeting of the environmental NGO Working Group on electronic networking was held in the offices of REC FO Kosovo/a (NGO Room), on February 16, 2002. In Annex 4 you find the list of NGO Working Group members.

Active and ongoing information exchange

After the creation of the electronic network of environmental NGOs in Kosovo/a, the active and ongoing information exchanged was put in practice. Now there are 15 active NGOs that cover every region of Kosovo/a. The NGOs made available all the resources, both human and technical, that they had in order to achieve the information exchange between them that consequently would lead to

improved environment in their communities. After a short period of time, other NGOs expressed their wish to be part of the network and give their contribute for a cleaner environment. At the moment Sharri.Net has produced two printed bulletins (March 2002 and January 2003) and has been contributing by feeding with news to the REC's electronic newsletter "Mjedisi Mujor". Another active method of exchanging information among NGO community is through the Sharri.Net's web portal, especially through forum section of the website. Environmental NGO members are trained and advised on how to use this tool so that they can post their information.

Sharri.Net Bulletin

After the establishment of the Sharri.Net, the working group initiated the creation of the content-management group that would deal with the information dissemination of the gathered data from the NGOs. The first informative product of the Sharri.Net was Sharri.Net Bulletin that was published jointly with the REC Bulletin of REC Kosovo/a's office. The Sharri.Net's Bulletin was published in March 26, 2002, and was disseminated in accordance with the distribution list of REC Kosovo/a's Bulletin.

The second issue was prepared during the period October-December and was printed and distributed in the first half of January. The second issue of Sharri.Net's Bulletin included a different design, format and number of pages. It represented a joint effort from the member NGOs of Sharri.Net with contribution with articles and photos. Copies of the Sharri.Net Bulletin can be found in Annex 5.

According to the submitted workplan 4 issues of Sharri.Net's Bulletin should have been prepared. This was not achieved due to the increase of the workflow related to the maintenance of Sharri.Net's website and not enough human resources and expertise to prepare other issues of Sharri.Net Bulletins.

Sharri.Net section in "Mjedisi Mujor"

Starting from 11th issue of "Mjedisi Mujor" (June vol.2), Sharri.Net has provided REC with news about NGO activity and related issues. Till March 2003, 17 consecutive issues of "Mjedisi Mujor" contained news from the NGO community with a total of 48 news articles. The average rate of published news is three per issue respectively six per a month. The news submitted by NGOs are edited and confirmed by the Sharri.Net coordinator and content manager.

Communication through electronic newsletter "Mjedisi Mujor", gave the opportunity to Sharri.Net member to reach an audience of over 350 recipients, which includes governmental and non-governmental organizations and officials, academia and donor community.

Sharri.Net Web site

In the original proposal for the Kosovo/a Project in REReP 2.3 it was proposed that a discussion forum and a NGO Electronic Network Section will be prepared and maintained as part of the REC Kosovo/a website. But, after a meeting with the Sharri.Net working group, where participants expressed their interest and willingness to take part in the creation of a separate web site, it was decided to take a step forward in this direction and to start preparing the separate web site. For this purpose a web design house was contacted that together with the technical group and the content-management group prepared the concept for the website.

By the mid November, the Sharri.Net's website was put online. It was made public in a meeting with donors, environmental NGOs and Medias in February 2003. The website is being updated based on the flow of information and it is enhanced based on the needs of the NGOs. Because of the restricted budget and resources, the web site is only in Albanian language, but with the intention of preparing the Serbian and English section of it in the near future.

Second 2,5 day Workshop for environmental NGOs on more advanced tools for electronic networking

Preparations for the second workshop for environmental NGOs on more advanced tools for electronic networking have started with establishment of contacts with possible trainers. For this purpose, trainers from BlueLink (Bulgaria) and StrawberryNet (Romania) were contacted. After the mutual agreement between trainers, Sharri.Net and REC FO Kosovo/a, work started in preparing the agenda of the workshop based on the results and assessment from the previous workshop held in January 2002. The agenda of the workshop can be found in Annex 6. The main outputs of that evaluation were that the majority of environmental NGOs in Kosovo/a currently have a fair level of Internet use. They are using mainly e-mail, and more advanced tools of communication and information sharing like mailing lists, forums, and websites are emerging.

During the Second Workshop on Electronic Networking the NGO participants improved their knowledge on Internet and e-networking. They also got some detailed and concrete skills in a way to be able to participate actively in the e-networking and information exchange through an electronic net as Sharri.Net and to be active and creative Internet users and to benefit effectively from the e-networking.

The workshop was held in a friendly and warm atmosphere. There were 4 NGOs participants from Serbian speaking part of Mitrovica, Kosovo/a. One of the Albanian participants from Mitrovica expressed his opinion that this is the first time he had a chance to speak to people from the other side of the divided town, and they should communicate further, because pollution doesn't have nationality, and their main polluter in Mitrovica is basically the same company. This is a very important step in the development of networking in Kosovo/a as a whole. The NGOs are encouraged to continue to communicate and exchange information and to search for further cooperation in a way to achieve in the best way their aims and activities, which is the basic point of the e-networking.

The “Environmental NGO Room”

The setting up of the “Environmental NGO Room” started immediately after the received approval from the Project Manager in the REC HO, Mr. Gabor Heves, that the workplan and timeline for implementing the Kosovo/a Project within REReP 2.3 regional project is acceptable. The “Environmental NGO Room” is a space within the REC FO Kosovo/a premises in Prishtina. This room is available for all environmental NGOs. In the “Environmental NGO Room” there are 4 computers, 4 UPS and a printer, with a local network, which is separate from the REC FO Kosovo/a's network. One of the computers has been bought as part of this project. A private donor in the Netherlands donated the other three computers.

The “Environmental NGO Room” has 24-hour on-line access to Internet. On top of that the “NGO Room” has relevant environmental publications and magazines available, and it serves as a meeting room for the NGO Working Group on electronic networking. Also, the local environmental NGO community uses the “Environmental NGO Room” for other meeting purposes.

Activities organized by the NGO Working Group on electronic networking

A joint project of the SharriNet working group was implemented after organizing two workshops with the aim of raising both the human and technical capacities of Sharri.Net. The working group of Sharri.Net held two meetings to review the proposals submitted by Sharri.Net members. The working group of Sharri.Net with facilitation from REC FO Kosovo/a decided to support the project submitted by NGO Aquila – “Joined together for a Safer Environment”.

The aim of the joint project was to promote electronic networking as a tool for solving environmental problems together with the introduction of the spirit of cooperation among the NGOs,

since the project was Kosovo/a wide and project was implemented by several NGOs. The joint project included visits by NGO members to 5 environmental hotspots. Every visit was organized by a different NGO in coordination with the leading NGO. The project included regular meetings of Sharri.Net working group and meetings with governmental officials and agencies, preparing a draft strategy for 2003-2004 and workshop on how to access and post news on Sharri.Net's website.

Transport and distribution of 14 donated second-hand computers to Kosovar environmental NGOs

The sixth and final component of this project is related to the transportation and distribution of 14 donated second-hand computers to environmental NGOs in Kosovo/a. This was made possible thanks to a very generous donation from a private Dutch company.

Based on the needs assessment one of the biggest needs of environmental NGOs in Kosovo/a was the lack of computers, which would enable them to take a more active role and enlighten the communication through an electronic network. A donation given by a Dutch company was a big help in this direction. Computers were tendered to all interested environmental NGOs in Kosovo/a. Application form for the tendering procedure can be found in Annex 7. Computers have arrived in Kosovo/a in the first week of May and were given to selected NGOs in mid May. The list of NGOs that were awarded the computers together with the gift certificate can be found in Annex 8. All computers were Compaq and Dell (Deskpro 2000 and Optiplex gn+), they had at least 64 MB memory, CPU 133 MHz and an average hard disk memory of 3,8 GB.

CONTINUATION OF THE PROJECT

The next steps for the implementation of the project are as follows:

- Monitor the implementation of the joint project organized by the working group .
- Continue publishing the news from environmental NGO community in the biweekly electronic newsletter "Mjedisi Mujor".
- Monitor the continuation of the project activities after the project implementation is handed to the NGO working group.
- Facilitate in consensus decision-making related to activities organized by the Sharri.Net working group.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

It is widely acknowledged that an influential civil society is an important pillar of sustainable peace, stability, and social progress not only in Kosovo/a but also in other South East European countries. One of the basic prerequisites for a successful cooperation is an extensive flow of information. Cooperation and information are closely inter-related, and one cannot exist without the other one. Therefore, for the long-term sustainability of the environmental NGO sector is very important the creation of a basic infrastructure that would provide the platform for an efficient and intensive flow of information. This basic infrastructure should cover both the institutional framework and the technical means of information exchange.

The aim of this project was to provide assistance to Kosovar environmental NGOs, to increase their networking and cooperation capacities. The project supported this goal by creating and facilitating environmental NGO electronic communication networks. Activities were implemented in accordance with the workplan and timeline submitted for the year 2002. Environmental NGOs initiatives lead the

implementation of project activities. The creation of the Sharri.Net – Electronic network of Kosovar environmental NGOs immediately after the first workshop that was held in January represented a joint success of all involved parties in this process. REC Kosovo/a played the role of a facilitator during the process of creating an e-network and did not to influence the NGOs in creating the Sharri.Net.

During the course of the project implementation Electronic Network of Kosovar Environmental NGOs - Sharri.Net, served as a platform for cooperation and bringing together the environmental NGOs in Kosovo/a. In this respect, REC as a whole and in Kosovo/a supported the environmental NGO community in terms of communications skills, human capacity, and technical infrastructure. For this

By the end of the first year of project implementation we encountered a stronger electronic network, more information shared and a regional meeting hosted in cooperation REC – Sharri.Net. The joint project, which was implemented in the last phase of the first year, gave a clear impetus to existing development and was accompanied with some changes in the structural and human resources. Starting from May 1, 2003 new coordinator of the Sharri.Net was appointed Mr. Burim Leci that in following two months resulted in changed structure (the creation of a 7-member Board of Directors) of Sharri.Net due to the need for a more efficient work. The Board of Directors (list of board members can be found in Annex 9), together with Sharri.Net coordinator are responsible for the implementation of the REReP 2.3 project in the year 2003 and further. The role of REC is reduced to monitoring and facilitation. A detailed workplan for the rest of the year 2003 will be submitted to the REC HO Project Manager by the second week of August.

After reviewing the final financial report for the current implementing year, there is a leftover of 6723.84 EUR. For this sum of money a special financial report will be submitted to cover the operational expenses of the project in the period April 1, 2003 – July 31, 2003. The final leftover we propose to use for the project implementation during the year 2003 under the supervision of the Board of Directors of Sharri.Net.

Finally we recommend that Sharri.Net should build up and provide openly its Internet services for Kosovar NGOs, including implementation of collaborative publishing tools. Sharri.Net should promote its web hosting and domain use to enhance community feeling and look. Besides the technical coordinator of Sharri.Net organizational coordination should be improved in order to have a better outreach and involvement of other NGOs. Sharri.Net should provide on-site support for those people who are not so familiarized with computers to enable them to use ICT-s effectively.

ANNEXES

Attached to the midterm narrative and financial report of the project REReP 2.3 “SEE NGO Electronic Networking - Project in Kosovo/a”, you will find the following annexes:

1. Financial report
2. First Workshop Agenda
3. Workshop’s participants list
4. NGO Working Group members
5. Copies of the Sharri.Net Bulletin
6. Second Workshop Agenda
7. Computer tender application forms
8. List of the awarded NGOs and the gift certificate
9. Members of the Board of Directors