



Environmental Aspects of the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund in EU New Member States and Candidate Countries

13-14 May 2004, REC Conference Center
Szentendre, Hungary

Final Agenda

Conference Objectives

- Generate, discuss, and record concrete lessons learned in the first Structural Funds programming period for the new member states and provide recommendations to better integrate environmental concerns into the next programming process
- Provide a unique opportunity for discussion between environmental authorities and regional development authorities (Managing Authorities) on the mechanics of the Structural Funds programming process and the prospects for sustainable development
- Gain insight to the development, preparation, and implementation of successful and sustainable Structural Fund programmes from the experience of environmental authorities from EU 15
- Identify areas for future cooperation among new member states regarding treatment of environmental issues within Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund

Day 1, Thursday 13 May

8:30 – 9:00 Registration and coffee

9:00 – 9:15 Welcome, Marta Szigeti Bonifert, Executive Director, REC

9:15 – 9:45 Presentation of draft conference background paper on environmental aspects of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund in new member states and candidate countries, and overview of conference objectives and agenda, Jennifer McGuinn, Head of Environmental Policy and Local Initiatives Programme, REC

9:45 – 10:15 Third Cohesion Report and Coherence with Environmental Policy, Charles White, European Commission DG Regional Policy Principal Administrator in the Information and Communication Unit

10:15 - 11:00 The Experience of the Italian Environmental Authorities Network, Aldo Ravazzi, Italian Environmental Authority for EU Structural Funds, Italian Ministry for Environment and Territory

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 - 12:45 Environmental Considerations of the Structural Funds in the new member states

- Hungarian experience with integrating environmental issues during preparation for the Structural Funds, Agnes Somfai, Hungarian National Agency for Regional Development (VÁTI/NARD)

- Czech experience with integrating environmental issues during preparation for the Structural Funds, Tomas Nejdrl, Attaché for Regional Policy, Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union
- Pilot projects on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of planning and programming documents – key issues for consideration. Jiri Dusik, Leader, Environmental Assessment Team, REC

12:45 – 14:00 Lunch**14:00 – 16:00 (including coffee break) The experience with integration of environmental aspects into the first round of Structural Funds programming for new member states and candidate countries, discussion in working groups.**

14:00 – 14:15 Overview of the challenges for integration of environmental aspects into Structural Funds programming, presentation of working group agendas

14:15 - 16:00 Working Group Discussions

- How has the programming process worked and how have environmental considerations been treated?
- What was positive about the first round of programming and what could be improved?
- What was the quality of environmental ex-ante evaluations for all programming documents?
- How have partnership arrangements with regional/local authorities, NGOs, business affected the programming process and environmental considerations?
- Other issues identified during the presentations and discussion

Participants will be divided into two groups, according to the type of documents their countries prepared for the first round of Structural Funds programming

- Group A - Countries which developed Single Programming Document: Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Slovenia
Facilitation by Milena Marega, Director REC Country Office Slovenia
- Group B - Countries which developed Community Support Framework: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and the Slovak Republic (plus Bulgaria and Romania)
Facilitation by Simona Kosikova, Director REC Country Office Czech Republic
- Group C – Candidate Countries, Bulgaria and Romania
Facilitation by Cerasela Stancu, Project Manager, REC Headquarters

16:00 – 16:45 Reporting Working Group Results

Presentation of results of each working group by working group members.

16:45 – 17:00 Conclusions from Day 1**19:00 Welcome cocktail, Promenade restaurant, Szentendre****19:30 Dinner, Promenade restaurant, Szentendre**



Day 2, Friday 14 May

9:00 – 10:00 Arrangements for implementation of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund

- The Structural Funds project cycle in practice in Finland, Terhi Trast, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Finland
- The role of the Environmental Investment Centre in Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund projects, Heiko Podersalu, Programme Manager, Unit of National Programme and ERDF, Environmental Investment Centre Estonia

10:00 - 10:30 Building partnerships for Structural Funds Projects – lessons learned from the application of the partnership principle, Teodora Donsz, National Society of Conservationists, Hungary

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 Outlook: the future of cohesion policy and environment

- Greening the future Cohesion Policy, Claude Rouam, Head of Unit, Cohesion Policy and Environmental Assessment, European Commission DG Environment
- Lessons for the integration of environmental aspects into the reform of Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund, Tomas Nejdil, Attaché for Regional Policy, Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union
- Discussion: prospects for future cooperation between different authorities and civil society and the benefits of international cooperation in the environmental aspects of the new cohesion policy

12:30 – 13:00 Wrap-up

- Summary of participants' priorities for future cooperation on environment and Structural Funds/Cohesion Fund
- Decision on next steps and future actions

13:00 Lunch