**Grants for the river**

The grants component of the Danube Regional Project was designed to enable environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Danube River countries to contribute to the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution of the Danube, and to cooperate with relevant stakeholders such as the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and the Danube Environmental Forum. The organisation took part in the Danube Pollution Reduction Programme (1999-2001) by enabling NGOs to contribute towards the initiative's goals. Additionally, the REC participated in the ICPDR expert group, which developed the Danube River Basin Strategy for Public Participation in River Basin Management Planning 2003-2009. This document was adopted by the ICPDR in June 2003.

**The Danube Regional Project**

The world's most international river basin, the Danube River Basin has been radically altered by human activity. It has lost 80 percent of its wetlands and floodplains over the last 150 years. The Danube Regional Project (DRP) was launched in 2001 in cooperation with 13 national signatories of the Danube River Protective Convention (DRC), the Danube Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The DRP's main goal is to help the ICPDR and Danube countries to cooperate in tackling the broad spectrum of problems facing the Danube and its tributaries.

The national NGO grants focused on:

- **Best agriculture practices.**
- **Reducing agricultural pollution through education and promotional efforts focused on best agricultural practices.**
- **Raising public awareness about the impacts of phosphates in laundry detergents.**
- **Conserve wetlands through, restoration efforts and through encouraging water managers to include wetlands in their planning activities.**

The grants component of the Danube Regional Project was designed to enable environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Danube River countries to contribute to the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution of the Danube, and to cooperate with relevant stakeholders such as the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and the Danube Environmental Forum.

**Bringing NGOs into the flow**

The national NGO grants focused on:

- **Agricultural discharge:** 28 percent of projects addressed agricultural issues through activities such as promoting organic farming.
- **Municipal discharge:** 27 percent of projects dealt with problems caused by municipalities, particularly in the area of wastewater treatment.
- **Land use/wetlands:** 22 percent of the projects involved outreach such as improving the natural functioning of wetlands and erosion control.
- **Industrial discharge:** 17 percent of projects involved activities such as raising awareness about household products and alternative solutions to unsustainable consumption habits.

In the second round of DRP grants, NGOs were awarded a combined total of USD 636,000, which was divided as follows:

- USD 377,170 to fund five regional projects, each involving NGOs from multiple countries. These projects focused on facilitating the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution in the larger catchments of the Danube River Basin. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- USD 40,000 to fund 57 national NGO initiatives which took a multi-stakeholder approach to address different issues related to Danube pollution.

In total, 62 projects were coordinated and monitored by the REC through its country office network, which covers 11 countries in the Danube basin.

**National grants improve water quality**

National-level projects were awarded up to USD 15,000 a piece for work that addressed a broad spectrum of problems facing the Danube and its tributaries.

**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>USD AWARDED</th>
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<td>50,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Grants on the river**

The grants component of the Danube Regional Project was designed to enable environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Danube River countries to contribute to the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution of the Danube, and to cooperate with relevant stakeholders such as the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and the Danube Environmental Forum.

**Grants for the river**

The grants component of the Danube Regional Project was designed to enable environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Danube River countries to contribute to the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution of the Danube, and to cooperate with relevant stakeholders such as the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and the Danube Environmental Forum.

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A Slovenian project gave families using cotton diapers USD 100 for the environmental savings they spared the community.

Reducing nutrient and toxic pollution at the national level

LEAPing into action

Five projects received on so many levels as the Wastewater Treatment in the Rural Households project in Serbia’s municipality of Cacak. With a grant of USD 9,000, the Association of Mountain Builders, Cacak set about to address existing issues in the Zapadna Morava River. The Zapadna Morava is one of the main tributaries of the Danube River, flowing through Cacak and is therefore subject to damage due to wastewater discharges.

The municipality’s local environmental action plan (LEAP) project documented seemingly intractable problems such as polluted waterways and accumulations from the large quantities of pollutants, insufficiently developed environmental awareness, a threat to the biological diversity of the waterways, and a general number of toxic species, which heavily burden groundwater and soil.

An ambitious plan to add the problems enumerated in the Cacak LEAP document was undertaken with the USD 500,000 grant received. Several environmental management campaigns, projects for management of existing pollution, and plans for preventing further pollution were started. The results of this network of stakeholders within the Cacak LEAP project were impressive.

The project is about eliminating pollution by reducing toxic waste and runoff, and the focus is on reducing pollution at the local level. Through the implementation of measures aimed at reducing pollution, the project aims to improve the environment and the quality of life for citizens in the Cacak area.

The project team includes representatives from various local government agencies, NGOs, and the local community. The project is funded by the European Union’s LIFE+ program and is expected to last for five years.

The project activities include awareness-raising campaigns, public consultations, and the development of a local environmental action plan. The project is expected to have a significant impact on improving the environment in Cacak and setting a positive example for other municipalities in Serbia.
Grants for the river

The grants component of the Danube Regional Project was designed to enable environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Danube River countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to contribute to the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution of the Danube River and its tributaries. National and regional grants promoting cooperation in trans-boundary projects.

In the second round of DRP grants, NGOs were awarded a combined total of USD 458,834, which was divided as follows:

- USD 177,170 to fund five regional projects, each involving NGOs from multiple countries. These projects focused on facilitating the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution in the major rivers of the Danube River Basin: the Isca, Tisza, and Tisa Rivers in Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.
- USD 40,000 for each of the five regional projects.
- USD 177,170 to fund five regional projects, each involving NGOs from multiple countries. These projects focused on facilitating the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution in the major rivers of the Danube River Basin: the Isca, Tisza, and Tisa Rivers in Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.
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The national NGO grants focused on:

- Agricultural discharge: 28 percent of projects addressed agricultural issues through activities such as promoting organic farming.
- Municipal discharge: 17 percent of projects dealt with problems caused by municipalities, particularly in the area of wastewater treatment.
- Land use/wetlands: 22 percent of the projects involved work such as improving the natural cleansing functions of wetlands and erosion control.
- Industrial discharge: 15 percent of the projects involved activities such as raising awareness about household products and alternative solutions to unsustainable consumption habits.
- Domestic consumption: 22 percent of the projects involved activities such as raising awareness about household products and alternative solutions to unsustainable consumption habits.

National grants improve water quality

National-level projects were awarded up to USD 5,150 a piece for projects that addressed a broad spectrum of problems facing the Danube and its tributaries.

While attempting to maintain the health of the Danube, Drina, Ipoly, Maramures, Prut, Sava, and Zitova rivers, the NGOs carried out activities directly benefiting both local communities and the wider Danube River basin. Activities encouraging organic agriculture took place in the Czech Republic and Hungary, new wastewater cleaning systems for households and farms were introduced in Slovenia.

The Danube Regional Project

The Danube Regional Project (DRP) was launched in 2001 in cooperation with 13 national signatories of the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC) and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The DRP’s main goal is to help the ICPDR and Danube countries to cooperate in fulfilling their commitments to implement the river convention and EU environmental legislation, especially the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

One of the key activities of the DRP is the distribution of grants to NGOs to help them contribute to the task. With these funds, NGOs have worked to:

- Enhance public awareness and participation by carrying out publicity campaigns and reaching out to media.
- Reduce agricultural pollution through education and promotional efforts focused on best agricultural practices.
- Raise public awareness about the impacts of phosphates in laundry detergents.
- Conserve wetlands through, restoration efforts and through encouraging water managers to include wetlands in their planning activities.
- Promote cooperation among non-governmental organisations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, and in supporting the free exchange of information and public participation in environmental decision-making.

The REC

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) was established in 1990 to assist in solving environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) by promoting cooperation among non-governmental organisations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, and in supporting the free exchange of information and public participation in environmental decision-making.

The REC has been involved in Danube environmental-related projects since its inception, and has taken an active role in cooperating with key Danube players to enable NGOs to implement transboundary initiatives. Through the REC, NGOs cooperate with relevant stakeholders such as the International Commission of the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and the Danube Environmental Forum.

The organization took part in the Danube Pollution Reduction Programme (1999-2003) by enabling NGOs to contribute to the initiative’s goals. Additionally, the REC participated in the DD-BP export group, which developed the Danube River Basin Strategy for Public Participation in River Basins Management Planning 2005-2009. This document was adopted by the ICPDR in June 2003.

Bringing NGOs into the flow

Second round of national grants for the Danube Regional Project

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