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The countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE) faced severe environmental problems caused both by years of environmental neglect and military conflicts, and the instability that followed. In making the effort to draw closer to the European Union, SEE countries have become part of the Stabilisation and Association process (SAP). The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe (REReP) assists SEE countries in meeting their obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA). These agreements were signed with Croatia on July 9, 2001, and with FYR Macedonia on March 26, 2001. On October 21, 2002, the European Council authorised the European Commission to open negotiations on an SAA with Albania, inviting the country to build its capacity to implement the agreement during the negotiations. At the EU Copenhagen Summit in December 2002, the year 2007 was chosen as the accession date for Bulgaria and Romania. REReP has also successfully supported the commitment of SEE countries to the goals and objectives of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

The programme has proved to be a participatory, flexible and transparent process. REReP was developed in 1999 in direct response to the immediate and imminent need for environmental protection in SEE. The countries identified the programme’s priorities and translated them into priority projects. They also took the lead in project implementation and reporting to the REReP Task Force.

While reviewing the REReP mechanism in 2001 to ensure its link to the SAP, the goals of the programme were described as follows:

- creation of functioning environmental institutions and the development of a sound, effectively enforced environmental legal and policy framework which approximates that of the EU;
- strengthening civil society, in which the public has access to environmental information, participates in environmental decision making, and environmental awareness is enhanced;
- achieving measurably reduced levels of environmental pollution and the corresponding health benefits that follow;
- minimising environmental pressures arising from economic recovery; and
- achieving genuine environmental regional cooperation on cross-border issues, which also meet obligations of the SAP.

REReP’s priority areas were re-defined in line with the restatement of programme goals concerning institution building, support to environmental civil society, regional cooperation mechanisms and cross-border projects, and reductions in environmental health threats and biodiversity loss. The international donor community responded by offering broad support for REReP’s implementation.

The first years of REReP’s implementation were characterised by pioneering work in the collection and processing of information, clarification of needs, establishment of project teams and networks, mobilisation of environmental stakeholders, and development of strategies and action plans. Nearly all projects began with a needs assessment, which made it possible to prioritise projects and focus support activities in the most appropriate way.

REReP has been successful in establishing regional cooperation and dialogue in SEE. REReP’s implementation demonstrates the vital role of regional cooperation and a common approach towards solving common environmental problems, as well as the importance of networking and sharing experience in countries with a recent history of conflicts and instability. REReP’s success is visible in each of its priority areas.

Some of REReP’s major achievements to date can be summarised as follows:

- establishing regional cooperation and dialogue, which has contributed to confidence-building and environmental security (multi-stakeholder approach);
- improving the coordination of international assistance to the region;
- enhancing cross-border cooperation;
- reaching advanced development stages of regional strategies — i.e. the Regional Priority Environmental Investment Programme (PEIP);
• building capacity, and strengthening institutions and civil society;
• carrying out preparatory activities for the transposition and implementation of the environmental acquis;
• strengthening environmental compliance and enforcement;
• supporting pilot programmes in SEE; and
• supporting the environmental NGO movement.

One of the best examples of cross-border cooperation is the successful joint activities of five SEE countries in the protection of shared natural resources in three cross-border sites: Neretva Delta (shared by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia), Skadar Lake (Albania and Serbia and Montenegro) and West Stara Planina (Bulgaria and Serbia and Montenegro). The following project activities have taken place:

• organising studies;
• establishing databases;
• mobilisation and capacity building of stakeholders at central, regional and local levels;
• delivering workshops on developing a vision for future development of the sites;
• conducting meetings to discuss specific protection issues;
• providing educational activities at the local level;
• awarding more than 30 local NGO projects; and
• organising numerous public debates, campaigns and public gatherings.

Based on the work accomplished, strategies for the future protection of the sites and action plans are under development.

SEE countries have established good working relations in nearly all of the activities within REReP. Dialogue has been fostered though study visits, seminars, meetings, training sessions and networking. Several regional networks have been established including:

• the Balkan Environmental Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement Network (BERCEN);
• the Network of SEE Environment and Finance Specialists; the Senior Officials and Legal Experts Network for SEE;
• the Environmental Advocacy Network for SEE;
• the Network of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (hereinafter, Aarhus Convention);
• Governmental and NGO Focal Points;
• the Hazardous Waste Management Experts Network; NGO electronic networks; and
• other expert and senior official networks.

In order to catalyse the national and regional networking process at the NGO level, computer equipment has been provided based on specific local needs. Workstations were installed in the offices of network coordinators or active network members, and the NGO Internet Cafe was organised, which—in addition to its main role of providing Internet access—has become a lively community centre.

Several regional strategies are in advanced stages of development—e.g. the Regional Priority Environmental Investment Programme (PEIP), the Hazardous Waste Management Strategy, and strategies supporting access to environmental information. The development of these strategies has contributed to the definition of regional priorities in their respective fields and to a variety of action plans, which has been of utmost benefit to the countries involved. In some cases, strategy development goes hand in hand with efforts to strengthen institutional capacity in SEE in order to ensure the implementation of strategic decisions. For instance, PEIP has identified SEE’s regional environmental priorities and investment needs. A list of priority environmental infrastructure projects is also in an advanced stage of development. Parallel to this, assistance has been provided to build the capacity of SEE environmental financing specialists on tools and mechanisms for financing environmental investments. The best practices among EU-candidate countries in this field were also reviewed.

Most REReP projects covered preparatory activities for implementation of the acquis communautaire and, in particular: the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive (IPPC); the European Parliament and Council Recommendation for Providing Minimum Criteria for environmental inspections; environmental impact assessment (EIA); strategic environmental assessment (SEA); and directives on access to information, hazardous waste and other concerns. This assistance contributed to a better understanding of these instruments, and has helped to develop specific steps for their application. For instance, SEE countries had an opportunity to learn about the implementation of various EIA provisions across Europe. In particular, they received practical insight into the screening and scoping stages of the EIA process, were trained to use the EU Screening and Scoping Checklist, and discussed various
systems of EIA-expert accreditation. All of these issues are ranked as priority concerns within the development of national EIA systems across the SEE region. Also, the SEA Training Manual was developed, which covers SEA legal frameworks, methodology and practice.

SEE countries have been assisted in the development of a regional strategic approach towards approximation, based on regional cooperation within SAP. A forum for exchanging practices and expertise has been provided through the Environmental Law Drafting Network of Senior Officials (ELDNSO) and legal experts in SEE. A transfer of environmental law experience (especially from the CEE region) has been ensured. The regional Strategy towards Approximation of EU Environmental Legislation in SEE workshop was a watershed event. SEE’s needs regarding the development of environmental legislation have been continuously assessed and are presented in the Regional Assessment on Environmental Law-Drafting Needs in SEE. Preparation of the assessment was followed by specific requests for legal technical assistance by countries and entities. Moreover, training has been provided to accelerate the approximation of the region’s legal system to the environmental acquis. In addition, to support efforts for integration with EU standards, the Manual on Necessary Environmental Approximation to European Union Legislation was developed for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To enable SEE environmental agencies and inspectorates to improve compliance with and enforcement of environmental legislation, an informal country-driven network operating under the SAP framework has been established: BERCEN. This network offers a unique form of assistance to its member and observer countries by providing a comprehensive body of support. The network has created a forum for regional and international networking, and exchanges of information and experiences in environmental enforcement and regulatory compliance among SEE and EU-member and candidate countries. Following the completion of national and regional needs assessments, BERCEN has organised a series of regional training sessions and international exchange programmes, along with study tours to improve the knowledge and skills of the SEE environmental inspectors concerning key relevant EU documents and directives, and their practical implementation. Moreover, all new knowledge and skills will be widely circulated throughout the countries within the organisation of national training programmes. In addition, the technical capacity of all SEE environmental agencies and inspectorates to monitor environmental compliance has been strengthened through the provision of information technology, monitoring equipment and vehicles. All these activities have an immediate impact and provide added value for beneficiaries, and the activities create synergies for improving environmental compliance and enforcement.

The enhancement of access to environmental information is a prerequisite for increasing public participation in and implementation of the Aarhus Convention. Hardware and software were provided to SEE governments for the development of national information systems. This has improved the connectivity of environmental authorities in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania, enabled the creation and maintenance of an efficient database in Albania, led to the dissemination of information via Internet in Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the collection of monitoring data in Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration). The “information technology services” provided include the expertise needed for efficient dissemination of information through the Internet, and the creation and maintenance of relevant databases.

The level of acceptance and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) goes hand in hand with the ability of SEE countries to accept and implement other environmental norms, such as those contained in EU legislation.

REREP output includes:
- country assessments of the level of acceptance and implementation of a full range of MEAs, published in each country;
- regional and national priorities for action;
- guidelines for compliance, enforcement and implementation of MEAs in SEE; and
- regional assessments.

Concrete assistance activities under implementation in collaboration with relevant convention secretariats (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe [UNCECE], United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] and the World Conservation Union [IUCN]) have concerned MEAs on trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes, trans-boundary effects of industrial accidents, and trans-boundary EIA. The activities are harmonised with the implementation of relevant EU directives.

National strategies for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and promotion of its ratification have been developed and put into action. These strategies met SEE needs for legal assistance, institution building, capacity building, training, information and raising public awareness. The formulation of national strategies has successfully complemented national efforts towards implementation of the EU directives on: access to information; IPPC; the European Pollutant Emissions Register (EPER); EIA; and SEA. They have also taken into consideration the needs of a forthcoming directive on public access to environmental infor-
information and the proposals to amend directives on public participation. Moreover, capacity-building workshops were held, and project beneficiaries had the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other SEE/CEE and Western European countries.

Aarhus and NGO focal points had a chance to attend the Aarhus Convention Meeting of Parties, Task Forces and Working Groups, which enabled them to take advantage of this international experience. Furthermore, five NGO pilot projects were funded to facilitate applications of the Aarhus Convention, which among others, include: enhancing citizen participation, promoting the rule of law and access to justice, disseminating environmental information, and raising awareness about implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

Lawyers and relevant NGOs from SEE countries have been trained in environmental public-interest law and the role of environmental legal advocacy/advisory centres in a democratic society under the rule of law. Committed environmental lawyers from the SEE region have been identified and grouped together in the Environmental Advocacy Network for South Eastern Europe (EANSEE). A pilot advocacy and advisory centre was established in Bulgaria. The centre provides free legal services to civil society and capacity-building training programmes to judges, lawyers and prosecutors. Direct assistance has been provided to members of the Environmental Advocacy Network for SEE to implement concrete advocacy/advisory activities and to take part in environmental law-related events.

Within REReP, the NGO Granting Programme was developed with the dual aims of rebuilding and supporting the environmental NGO movement, and fostering the development of civil society in the SEE region. Developing an environmentally aware civil society is especially important, not only for the public to make informed decisions, but to encourage transparency among SEE environmental authorities. Grants for NGOs in the region and for the South Eastern European Environmental NGOs Network (SEEENN) were provided to facilitate institution strengthening and regional cooperation. Eleven NGO cooperative projects were awarded grants in 2002, which are now in the first phase of implementation. The total grant amount exceeds EUR 280,000, and 30 NGOs are involved in the projects.

Assistance has been provided for the development of project-preparation capacity for environmental investment projects in small and medium municipalities. Nine environmental investment projects were selected in Romania and the Republic of Serbia. Workshops were held to train local authorities, public-utility workers and local consultants on key aspects of environmental investment-project preparation for external financing. In addition, full feasibility analyses and supporting documentation, for each of the nine selected investment projects—including financing applications, where appropriate — were prepared.

Needs assessments prepared within the REReP priority projects (along with other available information) indicate that countries continue to be in great need of assistance and support. Most of these activities must be continued if sustainable results are to be achieved.
Acknowledgments

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### Table of Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIMS</td>
<td>Acceptance and Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements in South Eastern Europe project</td>
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<td>BERCEN</td>
<td>Balkan Environmental Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement Network</td>
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<td>BMU</td>
<td>German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>CARDS</td>
<td>Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation</td>
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<td>CEE</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>CPC</td>
<td>Cleaner production centre</td>
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<td>DG</td>
<td>Directorate General</td>
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<td>EBRD</td>
<td>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Environment Agency</td>
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<td>EIONET</td>
<td>European Environment Information and Observation Network</td>
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<td>EECA</td>
<td>Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia</td>
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<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental impact assessment</td>
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<td>ELAC</td>
<td>Environmental legal advocacy/advisory centre</td>
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<td>EPER</td>
<td>European pollutant emissions register</td>
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<td>ETC</td>
<td>European topic centre</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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<td>GMOs</td>
<td>genetically modified organisms</td>
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<td>GTZ</td>
<td>German Agency for Technical Cooperation</td>
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<td>IMPEL</td>
<td>EU Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>INECE</td>
<td>International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPPC</td>
<td>Integrated pollution and prevention control</td>
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<td>LEAP</td>
<td>local environmental action plan</td>
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<td>NFP</td>
<td>national focal point</td>
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<td>NIS</td>
<td>Newly Independent States</td>
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<td>NEAP</td>
<td>National environmental action plan</td>
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<td>NISECEN</td>
<td>NIS Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for European Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PEIP</td>
<td>Priority Environmental Investment Projects</td>
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<td>PRTR</td>
<td>Pollution release and transfer register</td>
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<td>REC</td>
<td>The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>REHRA</td>
<td>Rapid environment and health risk assessment</td>
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<td>REPC</td>
<td>Regional Environmental Press Center</td>
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<td>REReP</td>
<td>Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association process</td>
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<td>SEA</td>
<td>Strategic environmental assessment</td>
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<td>SEE</td>
<td>South Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>SEEENN</td>
<td>South Eastern European Environmental NGO Network</td>
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<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>USEPA</td>
<td>United States Environmental Protection Agency</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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Through its Stabilisation and Association process the European Union is demonstrating its intention to keep international attention focused on South Eastern Europe, and is continuing its efforts to bring peace and stability to this troubled region. There can be neither peace nor stability without regional cooperation. The EU itself is an example of how regional cooperation can lift countries out of the ashes of war and conflict. This is why regional cooperation is an important part of the Stabilisation and Association process.

Regional problems need regional solutions, and the environmental difficulties facing South Eastern Europe fall into this category. The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe (REReP) offers a framework to help the countries of South Eastern Europe to work towards common goals. The European Commission helped launch REReP over three years ago and we are determined to remain a driving force behind this programme.

In the three years since its launch REReP has helped to establish a variety of initiatives ranging from the network of environmental enforcement agencies to assisting non-governmental organisations across the Balkans to push for environmental protection. We have achieved a lot, but much remains to be done. There is a long road ahead of us if the people of South Eastern Europe are to enjoy the same environmental standards as those of the European Union. But REReP has taken a positive first step along that road.

I welcome this publication as a means of promoting this approach so that others can benefit from its example.

Margot Wallstrom
European Commissioner for the Environment
Brussels
March 2003
Environment has proved to be an important platform for regional cooperation in the three years following the creation of Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe (REReP) to achieve stability and security in SEE.

We welcome the ongoing progress of regional environmental reconstruction, as well as the efforts of those countries committed to regional cooperation within the framework of REReP priority areas. We would like also to stress the diverse and tremendous need for assistance in the SEE region, especially with regard to environmental investment and capacity building.

From the very beginning, REReP was developed and implemented with a strong focus on the needs and priorities of SEE beneficiary countries. The crucial element for the successful implementation of this programme is national leadership and active involvement in project implementation.

The REReP approach is especially valuable as a country-driven mechanism for assistance and high-quality model to follow in the future. Moreover, projects developed and implemented under REReP can provide valuable experience for the whole SEE region and beyond. As the Stabilisation and Association, process has brought significant political changes to the SEE region, REReP has the ability to become a vehicle with which to assist countries in their efforts to integrate with the EU’s environmental Acquis Communautaire.

REReP beneficiary countries, with the same level of enthusiasm and dedication, have committed to future cooperation within the programme to achieve quick and remarkable results.

REReP beneficiary countries, knowing the value of the exchange of experience, will be more than happy if their positive experience during the process assists others in achieving rapid recovery and long-lasting peace and stability.

Roko Andricevic
Co-chair of the Task Force for REReP Implementation
Zagreb
May 2003
The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe (REReP) was developed to address the challenges of environmental reconstruction in South Eastern Europe (SEE) after years of instability and military conflicts. This programme provides a unique platform for trust and confidence-building because of its political neutrality, and because the trans-boundary features of most problems in question can be addressed efficiently only through a concerted effort. The REReP has been formulated to contribute to stability and sustainable development within the SEE region. Cooperation to build a better environment for the future is its driving force and top priority.

The engagement of countries in REReP’s development and implementation resulted in national programme ownership, which contributed to programme transparency and flexibility. This helped to attract impressive international support for REReP and made the assistance visible, coordinated, targeted and efficient.

Ministers of environment from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Romania endorsed the REReP in March 2000 in the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Thus environmental concerns were taken into consideration from the very beginning of the overall reconstruction process. The ministers then agreed on the List of Immediate Project Priorities for the Implementation of REReP. Serbia and Montenegro joined REReP following the political changes in 2001.

By promoting active regional dialogue and cooperation, the programme is assisting SEE countries in their efforts to overcome the past, strengthen environmental institutions, formulate viable environmental policies, enforce newly drafted legislation, build the capacity of human resources, develop an environmentally active civil society, and attract environmental investments.

The REReP mechanism was reviewed and adjusted in September 2001 to ensure a link between environmental reconstruction and the Stabilisation and Association process (SAP) in South Eastern Europe. Thus the REReP process in South Eastern Europe combined SAP objectives for fostering lasting peace, prosperity and stability in the region, with SAP objectives of harmonising the environmental policies, institutions and standards in SEE countries with those of the EU. A valuable complementary link to the EU accession process in candidate countries has been established through the participation of Bulgaria and Romania.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia joined REReP in November 2000. REReP projects have been implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration).

The Task Force for Implementation of REReP, which was established upon endorsement of the programme, has made essential contributions to the success of REReP by providing regular country reports on the progress achieved, discussing existing problems and offering continuous guidance for the continuation of activities.

The first years of REReP implementation were characterised by pioneering work in collecting and processing information, clarifying needs, establishing project teams and networks, mobilising environmental stakeholders and developing strategies and action plans.

The implementation of priority projects was supported mainly by the European Commission and the governments of the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United States. (For detailed information about financial contribution, see Annex II to the publication.)

Based on the results achieved to date, the REReP mechanism is widely acknowledged as a valuable assistance model that can be replicated elsewhere. This publication serves as an information showcase for REReP’s achievements and its potential value for other countries and regions. It also discusses lessons learned during the implementation of REReP priority projects.

REReP projects are presented here along four commonly agreed-upon priority areas:

- institution building;
- support to environmental civil society;
- support to environmental regional cooperation mechanisms and cross-border projects; and
- reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity.
All these areas are complex and interlinked. Taken together, however, they create a coherent platform for environmental reconstruction of the region. This publication is complementary to the first RERep publication, *Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme (RERep): Building a Better Environment for the Future for South Eastern Europe* (REC, 2001). The publication discussed RERep’s formulation, framework and priorities. It also contained environmental profiles of SEE countries, along with information on the economic and political contexts in which they successfully strove to fight environmental problems facing the region.

In addition, the “Category II” document, *Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme: Model for a Successful Assistance Mechanism*, prepared for the Kiev ministerial conference, describes the creation of RERep, its endorsement and mechanism of implementation, while this publication focuses on the results of the selected priority projects implemented under RERep.

For the purpose of this publication, a number of RERep projects were selected that show the variety of ongoing activities and forms of assistance in RERep priority areas. The projects are presented in a unified format, indicating their background and rationale, progress achieved and directions for follow-up measures.

Projects falling within the priority areas of institution building and support for environmental civil society chiefly attracted international assistance. However, activities regarding the promotion of cross-border cooperation and reducing biodiversity loss and environmental health threats are present in many of the projects. These activities are vital for the further strengthening of regional cooperation and environment protection in SEE.

This publication contains an introduction, executive summary, description of progress under each priority area and conclusions thereon, and factors for the programme’s success, followed by annexes. Annex I contains the text of Stabilisation and Association Agreement Article No. 103 relevant to the environment. Detailed tables of generated donor support are presented in Annex II, and summarised information on donor support is presented in Annex III. Annex IV includes information, presented in table format, on RERep priority projects for which the Task Force for Implementation of RERep Secretariat has limited information. Annex V presents the RERep project database accessible on the Internet.

This publication was prepared following a decision made at a RERep Task Force meeting during January 2003 in Albania, at which highlights of the Environment for Europe programme had been presented at the Kiev ministerial conference. The publication contents and the procedure for publication preparation were agreed at the same meeting. The publication is based on information submitted to the Secretariat of the Task Force for RERep Implementation as of April 2003. The activities described cover the three-year period between 2000-03. However, it should be noted that the top priorities for year 2000 were to ensure the necessary project funding and initiate the projects.
Work on the implementation of REReP priority projects began immediately after their approval by SEE environmental ministers in March 2000. The first financial contributions were received in early 2000. However, most of the funding was confirmed in the beginning of 2001. The international donor community mobilised impressive support within a relatively short period of time. Most of the projects in the areas of institution building and support to environmental civil society were covered financially. (Further details on donor support provided to REReP can be seen in Annex I and II to this publication, along with information on the number of REReP projects in each country per priority area.)

All contributions received from the countries and REReP implementing agencies submitted as of April 2003 to the REReP Task Force Secretariat form the basis of this publication. Among the projects implemented under REReP, we have selected those which show the variety of ongoing activities and forms of assistance in REReP priority areas. The projects are presented in a unified format — indicating background and rationale, progress achieved and directions for follow-up measures. The projects adhere to the REReP priority areas agreed upon during a review of the REReP mechanism in 2001. These are:

- institution building;
- support to environmental civil society;
- support to environmental regional cooperation mechanisms and cross-border projects; and
- reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity.
Institution building has been identified as REReP's first priority area. The strengthening of SEE's environmental institutions is a precondition for successfully implementing environmental policy reforms, for drafting and enforcing environmental legislation, and for attracting environmental investment. Projects in this area cover assistance in policy development — including strategies and action plans, law drafting, capacity building and institutional development.

All projects provide complementary support for the process of building strong and transparent institutions, as this is of prime importance for the success of the environmental reconstruction process and the implementation of SEE obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Process to the EU.

Nearly all projects are based on the transfer of best practices and lessons learned from EU-accession countries. Efforts have been made to draw, as much as possible, from the experiences of Bulgaria and Romania as accession countries.

Within this priority area, REReP has also assisted countries in establishing expert networks to promote the exchange of experience among countries. Assistance has also been provided for building environmental information systems that contribute to the transparency of environmental institutions and multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation.

**REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.4**

**Environmental Impact Assessment in South Eastern Europe**

**Background**

Implementing the capacity-building project for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in SEE as part of REReP has brought a range of results in the project's countries. Results were based on by three main factors: the level of the new EIA system's development in each individual country; country specifics that could influence the direction of EIA; and existing or former practices in the area.

The project has been made possible thanks to the generous support of the European Commission.

In virtually every SEE country, new framework EIA legislation that is compliant with EC requirements is being prepared — or has even been completed — within various support programmes for drafting laws. Thus it was natural for the project to focus on the practical aspects of implementing this legislation.

**Progress so far**

The Environmental Assessment Guidelines for SEE (developed within the project) provided the basis for introducing both the EU and other good international EIA practices that might be applied within the SEE countries. They were incorporated within the REC-UNEP *EIA Training Manual for SEE* to provide the basis for national EIA training programmes. The training programme consists of two different types of workshops: high-level national workshops and EIA practitioners' workshops that have been conducted at the national level. The training programme has been implemented in practice by national experts who have been trained at two EIA "training of trainers" workshops, and supported by EIA experts from various European countries.

The decisive factor that influenced the progress of the project's implementation was close cooperation with national ministries or agencies responsible for EIA in SEE countries. Another important aspect was the existing demand for the transfer of good EIA practices to the SEE region.

Project beneficiaries had the opportunity to learn from real examples of implementing various EIA provisions across Europe. In particular, they received plenty of practical insight into the screening and scoping...
stages of the EIA process, and were trained in the use of the EU Screening and Scoping Checklist. These topics, in addition to the EIA review and various systems of accreditation of EIA experts, were ranked as priority concerns within national EIA systems across the SEE region.

As a result of the project:

- Two EIA training of trainers workshops were conducted for a group of 25 EIA participants from SEE.
- Approximately 230 persons participated in the high-level national meetings.
- Approximately 200 EIA practitioners attended the national EIA Practitioners workshops in 2003.

From its very beginning, the project focused on the training of national experts who subsequently delivered national EIA workshops and contributed to the development of country-specific, local-language EIA materials. This investment in human resources will have a positive impact on the further development and better implementation of national EIA systems in SEE.

What comes next

Political willingness to cooperate is one of the main factors influencing project sustainability. The positive role of government was observed during earlier stages of the project’s implementation, and is further demonstrated by the active involvement of key EIA bodies (national and sub-national levels) throughout the project. This enables the project to avoid duplication of efforts with other support programmes, and streamlines major activities in each SEE country.

There is an excellent knowledge in SEE concerning the technical aspects of EIA (e.g. impact identification and mitigation) while process-management skills (e.g. EIA project management, conducting screening, scoping or review) are areas that require further improvement. There is a need to investigate the importance and scope of EIA in various planning processes in the build-up to reaching decisions on a number of issues.

The development of modern EIA legislation that conforms to EU legislation and good international practices seems to be a relatively simple task in the SEE region when compared to practical implementation and establishment of a fully operational EIA system in these countries.

Therefore, the focus should be placed on the presentation of practical arrangements for undertaking specific stages of EIA. It is especially important to:

- present commonly used tools used in EIA (e.g. screening, scoping or review checklists) that will facilitate those stages of EIA;
- Do assist the development of guidelines for implementing EIA’s requirements;
- present more examples of practical implementation of specific EIA regulations in CEE countries;
- focus in detail on issues concerning accreditation/licensing of EIA experts;
- bring issues of public involvement in EIA to the forefront of the EIA agenda in the SEE region to ensure that the public is involved at the earliest possible stages of EIA; and
- ensure that sufficient knowledge about the tools for public involvement is available to decision makers, and that the public is aware of their rights.

REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.4.1
Strategic Environmental Assessment in South Eastern Europe

Background

Strategic environmental assessment helps to ensure that strategic decisions are made that are sustainable and environmentally sound. It is undertaken in order to analyse and document the environmental effects of proposed strategic actions; identify alternatives and measures to mitigate significant adverse effects; and to ensure that any relevant findings are considered and integrated into the decision-making process.

Since 1999, SEA systems have been established by an increasing number of countries. Current driving forces are the European Directive on SEA and the Protocol on SEA to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (UNECE Espoo Convention). It is projected that these frameworks will significantly increase the number of countries making provisions for SEA in their environmental legislation over the next decade.

The capacity-building project for SEA introduced the principles of effective SEA application to SEE countries. These principles advocate the full integration of SEA and public participation into planning, programming and policy-making cycles. Seen from this perspective, SEA becomes a tool for integrated planning for sustainable development.

The elementary legal framework for SEA has existed in selected SEE countries since the 1980s, especially within the context of sectoral and spatial planning. This, together with the need to implement the EC SEA Directive and UNECE SEA Protocol, provides a good foundation for implementation of SEA systems in SEE.

The specific assistance programme for SEE countries started in 2001 thanks to generous support of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.
Progress so far

It was from this project that the \textit{SEA Training Manual for SEE} was developed. The training manual modifies and expands the SEA module of the UNEP Environmental Assessment Training Resource Manual. It is divided into three key sections (67 slides) that can be adapted for one- or two-day trainings in general SEA frameworks, or used in line with specific SEA methodology in the following manner:

- SEA introduction (global development of SEA, SEA benefits);
- SEA legal frameworks (overview of legislative framework for SEA in CEE, key provisions of the UNECE Protocol on SEA, policy recommendations for development of national legal SEA systems in SEE); and
- SEA methodology and practice (approaches to SEA, practical recommendations for integration of SEA into specific strategic decision process, case studies).

The manual was reviewed by a network of REC EIA/SEA trainers for SEE during Training of Trainers workshops in September 2002 (Tirana) and April 2003 (Szentendre). The manual was also introduced at national policy workshops on environmental assessment held in all SEE countries from September 2002 — February 2003.

Targeted support for development of a national SEA system has been provided in Croatia. The project supported three consecutive national consultative meetings on SEA, which facilitated discussion on the development of an SEA between the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of Croatia and other relevant ministries and regional authorities. The project also supported scoping for a pilot SEA of politically sensitive proposals for marine-culture developments in the bay of Mali Ston on the Adriatic coast.

Project activities and related discussions with national environmental authorities and EIA experts within this project confirm very strong interest in developing a national SEA system in all SEE countries. The countries are fully aware of the limitations of project-level EIA and wish to upgrade the key planning procedures (e.g. spatial planning) to incorporate the provisions of modern SEA systems. SEA is also perceived as an important tool for increasing transparency and public accountability during the existing planning processes.

However, most SEE countries (with the exception of Croatia) still have a long way to go towards developing functional nationwide SEA systems. The expected signing off on the UNECE SEA Protocol would oblige SEE countries to upgrade their institutions and legal systems and bring them in line with international SEA standards.

In order to meet these obligations, SEE countries might wish to use the reconstruction process to fully integrate relevant provisions of the EC Directive on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment 2001/42/EC and the UNECE SEA Protocol into planning, programming and policy-making aimed at achieving integrated planning. The implementation of specific SEA pilot projects should follow in order to test and demonstrate benefits of SEA applications within the reconstruction process.

REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.9

Capacity building for European Union accession

Background

This project supports the countries of SEE in their efforts to strengthen institutional and policy-development capacity that comes in line with the objectives of the Stabilisation and Association Process to the EU. Assistance has been provided on both a national and regional level. Specific national elements have been selected by each of the countries, based on particular needs. Regional elements have been considered with regard to the interests of all countries, and have been designed to enable the exchange of experience among the SEE countries.

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) has been implementing this project in close collaboration with its SEE partners. The project has been coordinated by the GTZ Office in Szentendre, Hungary.

The first project steering-committee meeting in Belgrade, May 27-28, 2002.

Progress so far

In September 2001 a planning workshop was held to develop a plan of operation for the duration of the project, as well as to define the planning matrix. In addition decisions were made on the projects to be implemented on the national level.

Two steering committee meetings have been held so far to discuss progress achieved within the national project components, to exchange experience and lessons learned, and to decide on regional project components.

It should be noted that project objectives vary from country to country. The implementation of national project elements stems from finding individual solutions — taking into consideration the specific objectives, institutional framework and capacity of each country. National projects have been designed to be part of the national EU approximation process. Therefore,
government authorities are the primary target audience and project beneficiaries. However, the project elements themselves are being realised by implementing agencies such as REC country offices or NGOs that work on the behalf of national authorities. If the projects are to be successfully applied, it is critically important that government officials are involved from the very beginning.

The progress achieved in specific national projects could be summarised as follows:

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Project on Key Elements for Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina Environmental Policy in the Process of Approximation to the EU consist of two phases:

- **Phase I,** which is completed, covered the assessment of current environmental laws and regulations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, development of the *Manual on Necessary Environmental Approximation to EU Environmental Legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina,* and its promotion at national meetings held in three cities.

- **Phase II,** which is currently underway, covers the development of two publications addressing basic considerations of environmental approximation for the NGO sector, in addition to businesses in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The phase also involves promoting the publications at national meetings.

**Bulgaria:** This project covered the development of a general plan to be implemented by 2006 for institution building and administrative strengthening for enforcement of EU environmental legislation. The activities support the capacity building of Bulgarian institutions for meeting the challenges of enforcing the environmental *acquis communautaire.*

**Croatia:** This project supported gap analysis of national legislation in the air-protection sector. An EU-accession strategy is being developed for the air-protection sector.

**FYR Macedonia:** This project is still being implemented. The primary activity is a public-awareness campaign for the development of new air-quality legislation. It will help to develop cooperation between different ministries, local governments and businesses, and make public participation possible in the drafting process of the Law on Air Quality. In addition, the campaign will specify conditions for successful implementation of the Law on Air Quality immediately following its adoption by Parliament.

**Romania:** The following activities are under implementation: an upgrading of the Romanian National Environmental Action Plan, and the elaboration of a pilot local environmental action programme and regional environmental action programme for the Caras-Severin region.

**Serbia and Montenegro:** This ongoing project, supports capacity building and institution strengthening of the country’s environmental protection agencies and inspectorates through training.

As indicated above, assistance has also been provided to encourage regional dialogue and cooperation in the SEE region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro have conducted surveys together with environmental stakeholders in order to clarify the need to improve communication regarding EU accession-related activities. Guidelines for common SEE environmental communication tools for EU accession will be developed on this basis.

In February 2003, Croatia hosted a workshop on legal harmonisation within the air-quality sector in the SEE region. Specific actions to address urgent needs for achieving legal harmony have been identified and agreed upon. Workshop participants discussed good practices and existing difficulties related to harmonising air-quality legislation.

The project confirmed the need for multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation in the process of harmonising SEE policies and standards to those of the EU. Dialogue and cooperation between ministries at the national level, and between ministries and authorities on regional and local levels, depend very much on the involvement of NGOs and international experts. The involvement of the industry and the business sector has to be ensured.

What comes next

At this stage it is difficult to determine the possible continuation of this project. Follow-up activities will be clarified after all expected deliverables are available, and after all available funding can be assessed.

**REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.3**

**Assistance in environmental law drafting in South Eastern Europe**

**Background**

SEE countries presented institution building and policy development as their first priority for environmental reconstruction of their countries. REReP’s institutional and policy development component for South Eastern Europe, which was endorsed by SEE ministers, is a direct response to these needs. Assistance to SEE governments in drafting environmental laws has been identified as one of the main activities in this area.

The overall goal of the project is to stimulate the drafting of environmental legislation in SEE that is con-
sistent, as far as possible, with EU approximation by providing: a common regional approach; a platform for exchanging experiences and practices between the EU, CEE and SEE; capacity building; and legal drafting. The scope of the project takes into account the needs initially identified by country/entity representatives, as well as those established in EC strategy documents.

Implementation of this project has been made possible thanks to generous support of the European Commission.

Progress so far

The successful establishment of the Regional Environmental Law Drafting Network of Senior Officials and Legal Experts from SEE facilitates the exchange of information among senior officials and legal experts from the region.

The Regional Conference on Prioritisation of Environmental Law Drafting Needs in SEE was held in Celebic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in July 2002. It was attended by more than 30 officials and experts (both domestic and international) representing, inter alia, the European Commission; the World Bank, the Office of High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Austria; Hungary; and Finland. NGOs from the SEE region were also present. The first meeting of network of senior officials/legal experts from SEE took place during the conference. SEE representatives made presentations on the latest developments concerning environmental legislation, the legal drafting in progress, and identified drafting needs. The international experts presented lessons learned from prior and current international assistance efforts aimed at the introduction of the EU’s environmental acquis in SEE countries.

The “Regional Report to Assess Environmental Law Drafting Needs in SEE” was prepared, presented and discussed at the conference in July 2002. Its drafting was based on completed questionnaires on the status of environmental laws from SEE countries and entities a study of available legislation in English, and a number of international sources. The report aims to assist the process of identifying the drafting needs for environmental legislation in the region through providing an overview of the current legal systems in the countries, and by giving recommendations and guidance for the future. The final report will serve as a basis for work within the countries or entities to prioritise legislative drafting, and will help to identify necessary resources.

On the regional level, a programme for capacity-building workshops on selected topics has been designed. Workshops assigned “regional priority” are related to EU environmental law harmonisation, EIA, and chemicals-related EU legislation. The major regional activity under the programme is the Regional Workshop on Strategy Towards Approximation of EU Environmental Legislation in SEE in April 2003, in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

This workshop’s objectives are to enhance understanding of the role of approximation within the EU’s environmental acquis within the SAP, to familiarise SEE officials and legal experts with the structure, logic and consequent steps of approximation with EU environmental legislation, to provide good practice examples and experiences from candidate countries that might be applicable in SEE, and to ensure a consistent regional strategic approach towards approximation of EU environmental law.

More then 50 participants took part in the workshop and participated actively in the exchange of experiences and views on EU environmental approximation. The lectures and discussions were organised in four sessions: SAP-building on the model for EU Integration; EU environmental law and approximation tools and instruments; introduction to EU environmental law and the approximation process; and, environmental approximation processes in candidate countries and the SEE.

Technical assistance provided by the project included:

- By the end November 2002, countries or entities submitted concrete requests for technical assistance to the REC. The requests were directed to the organisation of topic-oriented workshops, exchanges of experience among experts within the CEE and SEE region and legal drafting assistance.

- A second meeting of the Network of Senior Officials and Legal Experts took place in December, 2002 in Jahorina, Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the meeting, the senior officials presented the requests and discussed them with participants in an attempt to make them concrete, and to identify common regional priorities. Issues to be further discussed were identified in order to justify and specify the requests in detail.

At the beginning of 2003, one priority request was defined for most of the countries or entities. Several requests still need to be finalised. A pool of international experts is involved in concrete, short-term legal-assistance activities.

What comes next

Project goals, to a great extent, have been achieved. The project is enhancing a common SEE regional approach towards EU environmental law approximation and provides a reliable forum for cooperation between countries or entities in the region. Project participants are members of the Network of Senior Officials and Legal Experts in the SEE. Legal experts
and ministry officials were trained in strategies, mechanisms and tools for the approximation of EU environmental legislation. Moreover, countries and their entities/territories will receive short-term legal technical assistance, and technical equipment will be delivered to beneficiaries.

The senior officials and legal experts will be able, by themselves, to use the knowledge and experience gained during the project to undertake and execute EU approximation-related legal activities.

**REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.2**

**Developing a priority environmental investment programme for South Eastern Europe**

**Background**

Reconstruction activities in the environmental sector require considerable investment. It is important to identify and mobilise all relevant funding sources. Moreover, it was essential to develop a Regional Priority Environmental Investment Programme (PEIP) that encourages an effective and efficient response to funding sources available. Additionally, environmental institutional capacity has to be addressed in order to strengthen the existing skills in environmental investment planning and implementation.

This project is being implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration).

This project has been made possible thanks to generous support of the European Commission.

The main objectives of PEIP are to:

- develop regional environmental priorities for the SEE region;
- identify regional investment programmes; and
- present a list of priority-investment infrastructure projects as the first attempt to encourage effective and efficient responses to available sources of funding.

The main objective of the Priority Environmental Investment Programme is to create a framework for future activities concerning investment planning in SEE. It remains necessary to respond to the need for developing a programming framework for environmental investment projects — a transparent mechanism that can incorporate and merge demand-driven, environmental problem-solving processes, donor requirements, and the principles of international financial institutions.

While developing PEIP, three key elements were included. First, donors’ preferences are taken into account, which include: investment planning, compiling a list of environmental investment projects, and using the logical framework approach. Second, the regional environmental priorities are developed. Third, projects are evaluated in terms of cost-effectiveness.

Developing the Priority Environmental Investment Programme is a very unique, complex and challenging task. Its successful implementation in SEE, however, provides a valuable mechanism for learning about investment planning. In order to achieve the project results and enable countries to participate in this exercise, a number of approaches can be described as follows:

- The PEIP is, by definition, a process. Therefore the development of the PEIP document cannot be treated as an objective in itself, but as a framework for future actions of PEIP implementation.
- The PEIP is a framework document that is “owned” by respective countries. Therefore, the active participation of stakeholders is crucial for the success of the project.
- The PEIP presents several investment projects from SEE countries. The list of projects can not be treated as final, but as an initial effort to identify, list and prioritise investment projects in a harmonised manner, and within given timeframes and resources.
- The PEIP, while being developed on a regional scale, respects the national priorities of countries.
- Although stakeholders are involved and national priorities are respected, the tools and methodology were chosen with the intention of minimising any kind of politicised national involvement that could
influence PEIP results.

- This project is tightly connected to the REReP project creating Network of Environmental and Finance specialists discussed below. Therefore, cooperation with the network members was initiated and encouraged throughout the project-implementation period.
- When developing the PEIP, the experiences of EU-accession countries were drawn upon whenever possible.

**Progress so far**

Development of the Priority Environmental Investment Programme was done through the following activities:

- Training was provided to the project’s main stakeholders, including Focal Points from various ministries of environment, local consultants and others. Two team meetings were organised, during which methodology was discussed, as well as all steps of project implementation. The team meetings proved to be a successful way of encouraging countries to work together and reach a common understanding of what it takes to work on regional projects if the rights of other countries are to be respected. Also, during the team meeting, a discussion was focused on the general requirements of donors, including project-cycle management, criteria for project prioritisation and investment planning.
- The essential activity for successful implementation of the project was to identify the regional environmental priorities.

The regional environmental priorities are based on the three pillars: analysis of pressure-reduction targets, hot spots and national environmental priorities.

From a regional perspective, this was the first time a list of environmental priorities was developed that identifies areas that most urgently need attention. The environmental priorities were developed and discussed with decision makers at the first regional meeting, and are the bases for the investment projects prioritisation exercise.

The prioritisation of investment projects was the project’s most important activity. Within this activity and for the first time, project identification forms have been designed in order to compile a list environmental investment projects from the region in a unified way. Moreover, the criteria for the screening of investment projects, which reflect the findings of the regional environmental priorities, have been agreed upon with the countries. The screening results will be discussed at a second regional meeting in June 2003. Finally, investment programmes for possible implementation in the future have been identified for all priority areas.

The organisation of regional meetings for decision makers was the most efficient means of coordinating activities among countries and achieving consensus and endorsement of the work performed. Country participants sharing the same environmental problems were able to exchange experience and propose future steps that will lead to an improvement in environmental performance throughout the entire region.

The involvement of donor communities and international financing institutions was an essential activity. Participant feedback showed the commitment and willingness of this group of stakeholders to assist SEE countries in solving environmental problems — especially through environmental investments.

**What comes next**

The biggest challenge for PEIP remains one of implementation. It is expected that donor communities and international financial institutions will find the developed framework as a useful tool for identifying priority projects, and will continue to support priority projects. Additionally, the priorities developed on a regional level can be used by countries as components of national investment strategies.

The work itself also needs to be carried out within SEE countries. There is a need to prepare the implementing agencies of priority projects in order to manage donor support and increase their abilities to prepare projects.

Future activities should therefore be focused on working in the area of the regional environmental priorities identified mainly through:

- identifying future investment projects and prioritisation work;
- providing target-specific training for prioritisation within countries;
- facilitating donor assistance through regional meetings, and highlighting possible areas for technical assistance (project preparation) to be provided to priority investment projects;
- providing multi-stakeholder dialogue involving NGOs, especially when planning investments aimed at solving hot-spot-related problems; and which are solving the problems of the hot spots;
- assisting countries in using and adopting a regional approach at a national level.
REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.5.1

Institutional aspects of environmental investments in South Eastern Europe: establishing a network of environmental finance experts

Background

The countries of South East Europe (SEE), currently undergoing economic and institutional restructuring, face a rapid increase of demand for environmental investments. However, there is a need to strengthen the SEE institutional capacity and establish the necessary policy framework in order to develop and effectively implement such investments. This project used regional and cross-border exchange of expertise to assist SEE countries in institution building and capacity development within the field of environmental financing.

The project has been made possible thanks to generous support of the European Commission and German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

During the period of transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy in many EU-accession countries, environmental funds and other institutions responsible for managing earmarked public money for environmental investments helped to accelerate the pace of environmental improvements, leverage additional financing resources, and strengthen domestic capacities for project preparation and policy implementation. This project identified and transferred lessons learned and relevant experience from selected EU accession countries to the SEE region. In addition, possible future measures were identified, which could to be taken by each of the SEE countries in order to improve the establishment of institutional policy and enhance the effectiveness of environmental financing mechanisms.

In this light the project had two specific goals:

• development of the Regional Assessment of the Institutional and Policy Framework for Implementation of Priority Environmental Investments in SEE; and
• capacity building of specialists from SEE in understanding mechanisms and tools of financing environmental investments in selected EU-accession countries.

Implementation of the project in all SEE countries compliments to the project responsible for developing PEIP for SEE outlined above, which aims at providing assistance for development of the programme, including a list of priority projects. Through facilitation of the development of an institutional and policy framework, this project aims at strengthening the ability of involved SEE countries to implement the investment programme just described. The complementary nature of the project is reflected in the joint implementation of some of its activities with those of the PEIP (e.g. organisation of regional meetings).

Progress so far

The Regional Assessment of the Institutional and Policy Framework for Implementation of Priority Environmental Investments in SEE was developed within the framework of this project. The methodological approach applied in the assessment consists of the following steps:

• assessment of institutional and policy development for environmental financing in each country, as well as predicting future trends;
• identification of lessons learned, with respect to viability and effectiveness of different financing mechanisms;
• identification of typical development patterns in the SEE regional context; and
• drafting recommendations to help improve the effectiveness of implementing environmental investment projects.

The draft assessment was presented and discussed at the First Regional Meeting for Decision Makers in March 2003. The assessment will be endorsed at a meeting in June 2003 after reflection on the comments received. Conducting an assessment is an efficient way to highlight the specific problems which confront SEE countries in relation to the institutional and policy framework necessary for implementing investment projects. At the same time, it provided valuable recommendations for both the SEE countries and the donor communities as to where future efforts and assistance should be targeted, so that countries can develop the necessary institutional and policy framework for implementation of investment projects.

In order to facilitate regional and cross-border exchange of expertise in the field of environmental financing, the Network of Environmental and Finance Specialists in SEE was established in February 2002 at an high officials’ meeting on environmental financing in SEE. The network functions as an informal and open communication platform in which all major environmental stakeholders in SEE are invited to participate. The network developed and agreed on a work plan for 2002 and 2003. Unfortunately, limited financial resources reduced the number of agreed-upon measures that could be implemented.
One of the network’s most important objectives was to ensure the transfer of expertise in the area of environmental financing from the EU-accession countries. This approach proved to be an adequate one, as EU-accession countries share a legacy of inefficient use of natural resources and a lack of domestic environmental financing mechanisms.

The transfer of expertise in the field of environmental financing to SEE countries was facilitated mainly by the organisation of a ten-day study visit to environmental funds, and other institutions playing a role in financing environmental investments, such as ministries of environment or funding for environmental protection in selected accession countries (the Czech Republic and Poland). The study visit was attended by network members and aimed specifically at acquainting them with the practicalities of environmental-investment institutions in host nations.

According to the evaluation carried out after this event, the visit contributed to broadening participants’ knowledge — especially with regard to the structure, functions and day-to-day operation of institutions that are responsible for financing environmental investments. This experience is especially useful for those countries which have already established or are in the process of establishing an environmental fund (i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Romania). At the same time participants from the other SEE countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo had the opportunity to obtain detailed knowledge about general aspects of national environmental policy development and implementation. They also achieved better understanding of the importance of national institutions dealing with the financing of environmental investments.

Network members emphasised the need for further exchange of expertise and best practices from EU-accession countries, and highlighted the need for sharing the experiences among the SEE countries (e.g. experience of the Bulgarian National Trust EcoFund with financing projects).

Additionally, network members were invited to participate in several international conferences dealing with environmental financing issues, such as the Priority Environmental Projects for Accession Programme (PEPA) financed by the European Commission for the accession countries. Participation in the international conferences was a highly effective tool for SEE environmental finance experts to be involved in the ongoing activities in the environmental financing area and, at the same time, to become aware of future requirements connected to harmonisation with the EU’s environmental acquis stemming from the Stabilisation and Association Process for SEE.

Moreover, network members commented actively on different studies related to environmental finance and investments for the SEE region. These comments contributed to development of the draft Regional Assessment of the Institutional and Policy Framework for Implementation of Priority Environmental Investments, as well as the regional Priority Environmental Investment Programme.

**What comes next**

Institution building and capacity development is a long-term process and requires continuous assistance. In this context, activities launched under this project should find continuation in the future. This is especially important for the successful implementation of PEIP and the identified priority investment projects. Follow-up assistance could involve additional support to the network through:

- further institution building and skills development;
- providing tailor-made training for network members,
- organising exchange programme, internships, study visits and workshops on specific issues related to environmental financing connected to the transfer of expertise from the EU-accession countries;
- providing support for specific issues and projects identified by beneficiary countries;
- enabling the participation of network members at international conferences; and
- providing a platform for communication and exchange of information between SEE countries.

Further support for assessment of the institutional and policy framework developed under the network included: a follow-up assessment of the institutional and policy framework, which focused on recommendations developed during the first assessment, and, country-specific assistance to implement the recommendations of the developed assessment.
Regional strategy for hazardous-waste management preparation

Background

Problems concerning the management and transport of hazardous waste are, to a certain extent, common for all SEE countries. Large quantities of industrial and hazardous wastes are generated from mining-, metallurgical-, fertiliser- and chemical industries, in addition to power plants. There are other significant sources of hazardous waste, as well. Due to their toxic nature, management of such wastes becomes extremely important so that they do not adversely affect human health and the environment — particularly bearing in mind the newly formed amounts of hazardous- and other wastes in the region.

SEE countries face the important task of creating conditions for the sustainable management of wastes — including industrial and hazardous wastes. Through the close cooperation and advice of international and regional institutions dealing with these issues, and of national hazardous-waste management officials, the project activities focus on: defining the current status of hazardous-waste management in the target countries, providing assistance for strategic planning on national level through work of National Hazardous Waste Management Advisory Committees, and developing a draft regional hazardous-waste management strategy that will contain a projection of the activities needed in the region, technical know-how and needed assistance, as well as financial plan. This project also aims to improve the exchange of experience and expertise in the area of hazardous-waste management in these countries, with the ultimate goal of improving national hazardous-waste management therein and bringing it into the context of other targeted countries.

The main goals of the project are to:

- identifying counterparts in target countries, agreeing on local expertise with responsible ministries of environment and/or public health and encouraging the creation of a regional hazardous-waste network with national focal points;
- contracting waste experts via defined terms of reference on contents of national hazardous-waste reviews; and
- preparing national hazardous waste reviews and presenting them to the national focal points at the Regional Hazardous Waste Network meeting at Lake Ohrid in FYR Macedonia in November 2002.

National hazardous waste reviews are currently being integrated regionally. After the completion of this task, a second meeting will be organised, and the draft strategy will be prepared.

What comes next

A fully developed strategy, with an action plan and responsible executing bodies and timeframes, is to be carried out as a continuation of this project.

A regional approach and mindset is necessary and welcomed in the SEE, especially in cases where huge investments and the development of complex infrastructural systems are necessary. The stakeholders are eager to work together in the geographical framework of the SEE, since the countries have similarities in many aspects of environmental problems, and a proven track record of operating joint systems.

Hazardous-waste management is a field in which a significant amount of adverse health impacts and risks can be mitigated or significantly lowered by appropriate investment. However, experience shows that international funding has been inadequate to ensure that these direct, large impacting and badly needed measures are receiving the necessary emphasis.

A logical continuation of the project is to turn the draft regional strategy into a short-, medium- and long-term action plan, with clear targets achieved, responsibilities administered and deadlines set. This action plan will include a timetable and budget for the foreseen necessary actions. Based upon the draft Regional Hazardous Waste Management Strategy, coordinated further with the Regional Hazardous Waste Network, the national focal points and national governments, it should become the reference document for hazardous-waste management activities in the region. However, the continuation of these activities requires increased interest from the international funding community.

Progress so far

The following activities have been carried out to meet the project goals:
REPRE PRIORITY PROJECTS 1.7, 1.7.1 AND 1.7.2

Strengthening the capacities of national environmental protection agencies and their inspectorates in South Eastern Europe through the Balkan Environmental Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement Network (BERCEN)

Background

The Balkan Environmental Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement Network (BERCEN), established in Tirana, Albania in December 2001, is an informal country-driven network operating under the framework of the Stabilisation and Association process (SAP) for the countries of South Eastern Europe. BERCEN facilitates, assists and promotes the enforcement of regulations in SEE by disseminating information, finding common denominators for cooperation and developing projects of common interest. The member and observer countries work together to enhance the implementation of environmental legislation, and to increase the effectiveness of enforcement agencies and inspectorates. The member countries of BERCEN are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, and FYR Macedonia. Bulgaria and Romania are observer countries.

The provision of a comprehensive needs assessment on environmental enforcement and compliance, and of support for the prioritisation of needs through BERCEN, has helped national decision makers to improve existing environmental enforcement mechanisms. BERCEN has created a forum for regional and international networking, and an exchange of information and experiences related to environmental enforcement and regulatory compliance among the SEE and EU-member and candidate countries. Improvements in the effectiveness of environmental enforcement institutions in SEE countries through the provision of comprehensive training programmes, study tours, exchange programmes and equipment have been apparent. BERCEN has enabled the SEE countries to enhance capacities to levels that allow them to actively participate and contribute in the European Union Network for the Implementation of Environmental Law (IMPEL) projects.

The active and constructive cooperation by BERCEN member and observer countries, and high interest in cooperating with BERCEN by IMPEL, the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE) and the NIS Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network (NISECEN) has enabled BERCEN’s work.

Significant political commitment of the BERCEN member countries to develop a closer relationship with the EU by approximating their environmental legal systems to the acquis communautaire of the EU and harmonising their political, economic and institutional development with EU values has also strengthened the activities of BERCEN. In principle, BERCEN has contributed to the SAP through all of its activities.

At the same time, the absorption capacity of comprehensive knowledge by BERCEN member countries, various training- and equipment needs, and internal organisational procedures have also influenced BERCEN’s achievements.

BERCEN activities are supported by the European Commission, the Netherlands and Norway. In addition, in Serbia and Montenegro, the German government funded a complementary local project under REPEP Priority Project 1.9: Capacity building for European Union accession.

BERCEN is an informal country-driven network operating under the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Process for countries of South Eastern Europe, and cooperates actively with IMPEL, NISECEN and INECE.

National Hazardous Waste Review priorities for FYR Macedonia

Waste collection

- Set up national collection systems for clinical and radioactive wastes.
- Set up an enterprise (public- or public/private partnership) for the collection and disposal of hazardous industrial wastes.
- Recover, via levies, the full operating costs from waste-generating institutions.

Landfills

- Provide dedicated and safe hazardous landfill cells at proposed regional landfill(s).
- Provide clear procedures for industry declarations, and at the beginning of the process, conduct random testing at existing laboratories for characterising incoming hazardous wastes.
- Consider provisions for a laboratory at Krivolak, FYR Macedonia for testing incoming hazardous wastes. Introduce significantly higher charges for hazardous-waste landfills, and develop methods and a procedure for enforcing respective regulations to avoid non-compliance and "shady practices." New charges should correspond to the costs of correct management (i.e. safe incineration or safe deposition in specially-built repositories) of hazardous wastes.
Progress so far

The BERCEN Secretariat has made a significant effort in getting the required knowledge and skills into the network through international and local senior consultants, along with highly valued information through its strong cooperation with IMPEL, INECE and NISECEN. The secretariat has also been active in fundraising for BERCEN activities. As a result, BERCEN member and observer countries have expressed strong political support for the form of cooperation as provided by BERCEN, and have expressed great satisfaction with the network’s results to date: the network has made significant progress in its activities and completely met its project objective — the improvement of environmental enforcement and compliance in SEE.

The project’s specific results include:

- establishment of BERCEN at a meeting of high officials from SEE countries, and organisation of a BERCEN plenary session;
- preparation and publication of national needs assessment reports on the current legal structure and resources available to environmental protection agencies and inspectorates in SEE countries, as well as a compiled Regional Report on the Current Legal Structure and Resources Available to the Environmental Protection Agencies and Inspectorates in SEE;
- development and delivery of two regional train the trainer programmes for environmental inspectors, which covered training skills, the regulatory cycle, permitting, self-monitoring, on-site inspection, reporting, planning and frequency of inspections, minimum criteria for inspections and integrated pollution prevention and control, as well as the preparation and publication of the respective training manual;
- organisation of two exchange programmes for environmental inspectors on integrated pollution prevention and control (EC Directive on Integrated Pollution Control 96/61/EC and EC Seveso II Directive 96/82/EC ) and minimum criteria for environmental inspections (Parliament and Council Recommendation 2001/331/EC);
- assistance to enforcement agencies on defining the most urgent priorities related to environmental enforcement and compliance through preparation of project proposals;
- conducting of two study tours to Germany and Finland during which inspectors studied integrated pollution-prevention and control mechanisms and minimum criteria for environmental inspections, an environmental policy framework, and the organisation of environmental inspections; and
- provision of equipment (e.g. computers, printers, monitoring equipment) and vehicles (i.e. passenger cars) for environmental enforcement institutions.

BERCEN improves environmental enforcement and compliance through the establishment of an effective and efficient regional and international cooperation forum, proper assessment of needs, and improvement of human and technical capacity of enforcement agencies and inspectorates in SEE.

What comes next

The overall prerequisite of BERCEN’s sustainability is stability and security in the SEE region.

BERCEN’s sustainability is also influenced by political support for specific ways to strengthen the capacity and political will to integrate with the EU, as well as ensuring that the environment remains a high national priority. The absorption capacity of environmental enforcement institutions is continuously an essential factor for achieving success in BERCEN activities. Partial financial contribution to BERCEN by SEE governments is growing more and more necessary. Finally, playing an important role for the SEE countries by supporting their efforts related to their obligations and responsibilities from the SAP, BERCEN’s close cooperation with EU structures (e.g. IMPEL) is progressively vital for its achievements.

Based on the needs of BERCEN member countries to improve environmental enforcement and compliance, future network activities should be concentrated on capacity building and international cooperation.

Human capacity building (focusing mainly on core groups in each country with high potential for transferring knowledge, skills and experiences in their home organisations) should include:

- specific and practical training programmes in minimum criteria for environmental inspections, integrated pollution prevention and control, risk assessment, the Seveso II Directive and human resources management, and other areas;
- exchange programmes (including presentations, discussions and site visits) in the fields of minimum criteria for environmental inspections, integrated pollution prevention and control, accidents, and others, in BERCEN and IMPEL member and observer countries;
- internship programmes with hands-on experience for senior and/or chief inspectors in BERCEN, and IMPEL member and observer countries;
- study tours for environmental enforcement institutions and agencies to IMPEL member countries; and
• in-country training programmes for BERCEN regional training participants in order to spread information, knowledge and skills widely among all environmental enforcement institutions and agencies.

Technical capacity should be built by procuring:
• equipment (e.g. information technology and monitoring equipment) for environmental enforcement institutions and agencies, and
• vehicles (e.g. passenger cars) for environmental inspections.

International cooperation should be supported through:
• participation of BERCEN member countries in IMPEL projects, regular meetings and conferences;
• participation of BERCEN member countries in the activities of NISECEN (e.g. study tours);
• participation of BERCEN member countries in the activities of INECE; and
• specific joint projects among BERCEN member countries that carry out work similar to that of IMPEL.

The beneficiary countries for each BERCEN activity should be carefully identified, as the needs of BERCEN member vary, depending on their current status and capacity in the field of environmental enforcement and compliance. Therefore, diversifying the participation of BERCEN member countries in various network activities is increasingly important in order to respond properly to the needs of each country.

REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.8
Environmental information systems development in South Eastern Europe

Background

Several state-of-the-art information-technology tools have been adopted by governments to enhance citizens' access to environmental information. This is aimed at fulfilling their international legal obligations and reporting requirements, and fostering democracy and improving civil society. The Development of National Environmental Information Systems project aims to help countries and territories in SEE to develop their own environmental information systems. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands funded this project to encourage the wider use of information technology in processing and disseminating environmental information to the public. The project encourages an exchange of environmental information and experience in building information systems particular to the region.

Project activities take place in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia (the project’s lead country), FYR Macedonia and Romania. The project also involves Serbia and Montenegro, which includes Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration).

The Internet has increased the volume of environmental information that can be collected, processed, stored and disseminated to the general public. Access to modern technology enables people to obtain information online whenever necessary. It has also made it possible to format information to fulfill the particular needs of each individual user. It also has the potential to improve the political transparency and accountability of governments.

Implementation of the project has been possible thanks to generous support from the Netherlands.

Progress so far

Needs assessments and prioritisation concerning SEE environmental information systems have taken place, and national actions plans have been developed for them. On these bases, concept papers for spending available funds were prepared with equipment and services procured, and a workshop was organised on environmental information systems development for regional participants.

Overall, countries and territories received equipment and services worth over EUR 360,000 under this project. In addition, indirect assistance has been delivered by providing a forum for deciding on priorities for building national environmental information systems, in exchange for experience and training.

The equipment procured included hardware, software and monitoring equipment needed for the development of an environmental information system. For example, it has improved the connectivity of environmental authorities in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania, enabled efficient database creation and maintenance in Albania, information dissemination via the Internet in Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and collection of monitoring data in Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration). Services included providing the expertise needed for efficient dissemination of information through the Internet, or via traditional media as newsletters, and the creation and maintenance of databases.

In addition, a compendium was prepared regarding the provision of access to environmental information through electronic and non-electronic means. Twelve case studies discussed therein were finalised and distributed to project partners, as well as to Aarhus nation-
al focal points. The studies are available online at: <www.rec.org/e-aarhus/>.

Moreover, a pilot environmental information system in Croatia is being implemented to enhance access to information on coastal waters and the Neretva River Delta. It is based on a concept paper approved by the Croatian Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning.

Based on viability and need, this local pilot project in Croatia was designed to enhance access to national environmental information and the national information system for the water sector in Croatia. Successful implementation could confirm the feasibility of the project concept. The pilot system could serve as a model for other SEE countries wishing to develop similar systems. Information on the quality of coastal water can be viewed online at <www.croea.com>. The website also provides information on bathing water regulations, environmental, environmental law and national parks.

The project team felt it important to share the ongoing work of REReP 1.8 with the Internet community, as well as to provide a platform for the project team (consisting of almost 50 experts) to access the project's results. The website was prepared throughout 2002 and launched at the end of the year. It can be accessed via the REReP homepage at: <www.rec.org/REC/Programs/-REREP/Default.html> and at: <www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REREP/InformationSystems/Default.html>.

A summary handbook detailing key results of the country reports will be produced. Entitled “Snapshot of Environmental Information Systems in South Eastern Europe: Current Progress and Future Priorities,” the report will offer an executive summary, country-by-country reviews of approximately four pages in length, and will indicate current progress in information-systems development (each featuring a case study on how project funds were used in country), as well as future priorities and requirements (including financial terms and NGO observations), in line with national action plans.

The handbook was initiated in October 2002 and should be finalised in autumn 2003, following a round of discussions during a wrap-up workshop in Sofia. The report is intended to disseminate project results and indicate required future actions that are important both to local stakeholders and the REReP donor community.

The project addresses a clear need (i.e. Aarhus Convention implementation and information society development). The project also relies on a sound methodology and strong project management. It has maintained a positive relationship with donors, beneficiaries and external advisors. It links well with other related REReP initiatives. The project will also provide concrete incentives and benefits to countries, besides indirect benefits, such as exchanging experience and know-how.

**What comes next**

This project establishes a regional framework that can lead to future sustainability: it allows the creation of a structure for continuous civil society involvement in developing, monitoring and evaluating the progress of implementation strategy in SEE countries. It will also result in improved understanding, support and compliance with international initiatives (including the Aarhus Convention, PRTR, the EEA/EIONET and EU directives, and OECD recommendations and guidelines). Success of the pilot information system implementation for a single environmental thematic area is a basic model for future designs and implementation of environmental information systems in South East Europe. Funding has been utilised for the purchase of equipment that will remain with the respective beneficiaries. A successful wrap-up workshop in June 2003 will indicate country demand for the continuation of activities. Possible fields of future work include the new Directive on Public Access to Environmental Information (2003/4/EC), compliance promotion, strengthening interaction with other stakeholders, linking online governance initiatives (particularly DG Information Society) and addressing countries where the greatest weaknesses and needs exist — for example Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia and Kosovo.

**REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.6**

**Cooperation between the European Environment Agency and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro**

**Background**

Cooperation between the European Environment Agency (EEA) and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia was, upon eligibility for support, initiated in 1996 and 1997 under Phare’s Multi-Country Programme. Consequently, these three countries have been fully integrated in all activities and projects underway in relation to EEA cooperation with the Phare countries.

Due to the closing down of the Phare Multi-Country Programme (the last budget available was from 1998) a financial gap appeared at the end of 1999, threatening the continuation of previously developed cooperation. A Danish EPA project in 2000 helped to fund the participation of these countries in key EEA events. In response to the need of the EEA for additional funding to cover a growing number of countries, the European Commission concluded two grants with EEA in 2001 and 2002 within the REReP framework to assist coun-

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PROGRESS ACHIEVED WITHIN PRIORITY AREAS

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terpart activities and continue the cooperation. In addition to these three countries, grants were also extended to Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro. The current projects project’s life span is 18 months. The objectives are:

- to assist Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and FYR Macedonia in continuing cooperation with the EEA, as already developed under Phare framework assistance between 1996-99, and further supported through a Danish EPA project in 2000; and
- to bring Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro into a fast-track relationship with EEA work in order to achieve a coherent package of activities developed for all Phare countries.

Beneficiaries of the two projects are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro. The tasks of two projects aimed at the continuation of the cooperation and its gradual integration into the EEA Work Programme activities to achieve a harmonised approach with EEA-member and non-member countries. Priority tasks are as follows:

- extending European Topic Centre work programmes to cover the five countries in the field of nature protection and biodiversity, air and climate change, water, terrestrial environment, and waste and material flow;
- developing the EIONET telematic network in Bosnia Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia and its extension to Albania, Croatia and Serbia an Montenegro;
- assisting the five countries participating in key EEA reporting activities; and
- supporting the national experts of these countries for participation in major EEA events.

Progress so far

The two projects have achieved their main objectives. The cooperation of EEA with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and FYR Macedonia was preserved and developed. Cooperation with Croatia was established in 2001, and Serbia and Montenegro in 2002. The five countries have been included in all major EEA activities. International data exchange for EEA assessments and reporting needs has been re-established with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia. It has been set up for the first time with Croatia, and will be set up in Serbia and Montenegro after the establishment of a national reporting network. Comparative data flows with Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia from 2000-01 show significant progress. The EEA European Topic Centres (ETCs) supported development of the national EIONET networks, including specific country missions in four countries. Inaugural missions to Serbia and Montenegro are still in the planning stage.

The work programmes of the five ETCs have been extended to cover the five countries. Major tasks of the ETCs comprise support development of a national European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET), support EEA indicator development, data collection and reporting, and implementation of European monitoring and information systems. The smooth set-up and continuation of these activities was ensured by addressing EEA member and non-member countries in a uniform way via identical structures and activities.

The EIONET telematics network is the technical backbone for communications and exchange of data and information within the EIONET network of organisations. The network (operational in Bosnia Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia from 2000) was extended to Croatia in February 2003. The extension to Albania and Serbia and Montenegro was initiated and is slated for completion in 2003.

EEA reporting is based on five-year-cycle state of the environment reports and interim indicator-based reports. The indicator-based reports are key EEA products targeting European-level policy makers and EEA member countries, as well as the general public. The yearly cycle of these reports provides a benchmark for the state of the environment, as well as for the integration of the environment into various sectors (transport, energy, agriculture, tourism, etc.). They are based on European-level indicators for the state of the environment. In order to produce the reports, a reporting network is established, which is based on national EIONET networks of organisations and a regular flow of data between the EEA and the countries. The five countries are not yet included in the EEA indicator-based reports, but the preparatory work (development of a reporting system for production of indicators) has begun. The first grant provided funds for specific support to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and FYR Macedonia for their inclusion into the Kiev assessment report. The established reporting network will be further enhanced and will serve as a basis for the development of a national EIONET network. The second grant will provide support to Albania, and Serbia and Montenegro to start the process of indicator development and set up a reporting network focusing on air and water.

The EIONET network of organisations is one of three instrumental pillars of the EEA. It is the EEA counterpart for working with the countries — from coordination of all EEA activities through the organisation of country data collection and data deliveries to reporting. The EIONET network already established in Phare countries was extended to Croatia in 2001, and Serbia
and Montenegro in 2002. Thanks to these grants, the five countries started regular participation in all major EEA events and annual topic workshops. The extension of the EEA work to cover five countries ensured harmonised development with EEA member countries. The EIONET network is largely nominated from Albania and FYR Macedonia. There are also main nominations for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia and a national focal point for Serbia and Montenegro. The two projects will allow the strengthening and development in the future for a mature network, as is the case in EEA member countries.

Experts from the five countries have participated in more than 20 events funded through the project, comprising regular national focal points and EIONET meetings, reporting meetings, topic workshops and other specific meetings.

The overall project management and coordination (including budgetary and administrative services) is provided directly by the EEA in order to ensure coordinated efforts.

What comes next

The two projects assisted the five countries in setting up cooperation for joining the EEA as cooperating countries in facing the enlargement process. All activities developed with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia with the Phare programme support continued and developed into regular activities of EEA cooperating countries via extension of the EEA Work Programme and activities. The two projects were an invaluable bridging element between developments under support from the Phare programme and the renewed cooperation status. None of the activities underway before the two projects was discontinued. On the contrary, they were further developed and consolidated, and included two new countries.

In order to continue this cooperation and develop it further towards EEA membership, new financial support will be necessary in 2003. It is beneficial that the new funds cover the five countries in one coherent project and approach. The lifetime of the support shall also be longer in order to ensure smooth transition of the current results and their continuation.

REREP HIGHLIGHTS

REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 1.12

Strengthening multilateral environmental agreements in South Eastern Europe

Background

In SEE there is great interest in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) — conventions, protocols and other international legal instruments — and their implementation. MEAs are one of the main means for fixing international environmental norms into binding rules on a national level. By setting international standards and committing states to meeting them as a matter of international obligation, MEAs are a major force for focusing resources and actors on environmental problems. Moreover, environmental authorities, traditionally very weak within government structures in these countries, are able to achieve much more if they can appeal to the need for their country to meet its international obligations.

MEAs work in tandem with other standard-setting processes, in particular those of the European Union. The international and European regimes are mutually reinforcing. There are numerous examples of developments in MEA regimes influencing the development of EU legislation, and vice versa. Recent examples include SEA, pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs), and civil liability for environmental harm. For the countries of SEE, approximation to the legislation of the European Community is a goal, so it is important to understand that EU law is a moving target, responding to developments under MEAs, and that the approximation and implementation of EU environmental law work hand in hand with the implementation of measures to meet obligations under MEAs.

Besides their purely legal function, MEAs provide a structure for dialogue among states. This is true both on a regional level (where international assistance efforts are often focused) and on a wider level among all parties to a particular instrument. Because the vast majority of MEAs involve trans-boundary issues, they are particularly well-suited to provide mechanisms for mutual cooperation and joint resolutions on pressing environmental concerns.

Unfortunately, SEE countries have a relatively low rate of accession to MEAs and face obstacles in implementation due to reduced resources and fundamental restructuring of authorities and enforcement mechanisms.

Implementation of the project has been possible thanks to generous support of the Netherlands.

Progress so far

The dual objectives of the Acceptance and Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements in South Eastern Europe (AIMS) project are to spread international environmental norms to the SEE region and to develop a potentially significant area for interstate dialogue through increasing the application of relevant MEAs in the SEE countries. The AIMS project is aimed at authorities and expert communities, both regionally and on a country-by-country basis. The countries covered are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro.
Two networks have been activated: the Network of Senior Officials and the Legal Experts Network. Both networks have been supported by the REC and its project partners, including UNECE, IUCN and UNEP. The Legal Experts Network was activated first and held its first meeting in Romania in October 2001. Thereafter, joint meetings of the two networks were held, in Bulgaria in May 2002, and Albania in November 2002. Meetings have rotated among the three lead countries: Romania, Bulgaria and Albania.

Seven country assessments by local environmental legal experts have been drafted to assess the level of acceptance and implementation of a wide range of MEAs, and four have been finalised through extensive discussion.

One country assessment (for Serbia and Montenegro) has been published in a local-language version, and two other assessments (Albania and Romania) are in the process of translation and publication. Six countries conducted prioritisation exercises on the basis of the country assessments. Of these, three involved full multi-stakeholder processes and the establishment of National Advisory Committees.

A detailed, comprehensive SEE sub-regional assessment report (Assessment of MEA applicability and implementation in South Eastern Europe) was drafted, based on the results of the country assessments, prioritisation exercises, and the input of project partners, including international organisations.

The meetings held under the project have included in-depth discussion of problems of implementation and enforcement of measures taken to implement MEAs, involving the use and dissemination of materials such as the UNEP and UNECE guidelines on compliance, enforcement and implementation.

Specific requests for assistance have been received on the basis of the prioritisation. On the basis of these priorities, activities are being planned, and the first ones will take place in April/May 2003. These initial concrete activities include training programmes for improving implementation of the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes in Romania and Bulgaria; a regional workshop on the linkages and compatibility with ECE conventions on trans-boundary EIA and industrial accidents; and an MEA forum for Albania.

The documents relating to the project can be found on the project website: <www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REReP/AIMS/>.

As a result of these activities, countries have developed a better idea of where they are in comparison with other countries in terms of acceptance and implementation of MEAs and, in particular, as compared to the CEE region. In addition, the project has brought countries together to find a common regional perspective and to exchange experience on the regional level. The participation of Bulgaria and Romania in the project is particularly valuable, as these countries have often addressed some of the most fundamental problems of implementation and can share their experiences.

The project has already had an impact on the extent to which authorities in subject countries are developing concrete mechanisms for implementing MEAs and meeting their international obligations. SEE countries often receive an overview and realistic perspective on the magnitude of their commitments for the first time. This has resulted in the first steps towards development of concrete action plans. As a result, countries are promoting more focused and defined project ideas towards the secretariats and other assistance organisations.

There has been strong interest in country assessments on the national level. The publication of an assessment for Serbia and Montenegro proved so successful that other countries are following suit, and this objective has been added to the original project. Network meetings have also been valuable in providing an opportunity for the exchange of experience — not only among the countries themselves, but also with the participation of those international organisations (including the UNECE, UNEP, IUCN and REC) most involved with MEA development, servicing and implementation, and the practical problems associated with them.

What comes next

The lead countries have expressed a strong interest in continuing the project beyond its current phase. While the AIMS project continues to address systemic issues related to acceptance and implementation of MEAs in general, the project has advanced far enough to focus also on specific MEAs that have been identified as priorities in one or more countries. With respect to the former:

• The Legal Experts Network is working on the adaptation of international guidelines on implementation, compliance and enforcement of MEAs in the SEE context.

• Country assessments are being translated and published in national languages in several countries.

• The SEE sub-regional assessment report titled Assessment of MEA Applicability and Implementation in South Eastern Europe will be finalised and published.

With respect to specific MEAs, activities will focus on requests received under the project. Already in the pipeline are projects related to the following MEAs:

• the Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1989);
• Convention on the Trans-Boundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (2000);

• the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context (1991); and

• other biodiversity-related conventions.

In addition, on the national level, an MEA forum covering a wide range of MEAs with potential applicability to Albania will be organised for that country in cooperation with UNEP and UNECE.
Support to Environmental Civil Society

Strengthening environmental civil society requires full and easy access to information exercised by an environmentally aware and participatory public. Such public participation is possible when there is a functioning legal framework ensuring public participation. This in turn is very important, taking into consideration the responsibilities of SEE countries with EU approximation and the implementation of international binding instruments such as the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. Several REReP projects have provided assistance to SEE in this respect.

Support for an environmental civil society also means strengthening the NGO movement. Within the REReP context, NGOs received technical and financial support which helped them to further develop capacity and networks, and actively contribute to the process of SEE environmental reconstruction.

Another important aspect of the civil society-building process is free access to information. Significant efforts and resources were invested in the establishment of the Regional Environmental Press Center for SEE, coverage of SEE priority problems and achievements in the Bulletin and the promotion of electronic networking for NGOs.

REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 2.2
Strategies for implementation of the Aarhus Convention in South Eastern Europe

Background

One of the preconditions (as well as a useful mechanism) for effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention is the development of implementation strategies and action plans. These strategies need to be based on a thorough assessment of needs regarding the legislative and institutional framework and practices, capacity building, training, information dissemination and public-awareness raising, as well as identification of priorities for the more efficient and successful implementation of the convention.

Goals of the project Support Developing Strategies for Implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in the SEE are:

- to develop an effective strategy to ensure effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention in SEE;
- to provide assistance to SEE government officials for developing an implementation strategy;
- to develop a structure for civil society officials and NGOs — thereby enabling them to implement the convention.

The project has been made possible thanks to generous support of the Netherlands.

The subject of the UNECE Aarhus Convention goes to the heart of the relationship between people and governments. The convention is not only an environmental agreement, but is also about government accountability, transparency and responsiveness. The convention grants the public rights and imposes obligations regarding access to information and public participation and access to justice on parties and public authorities. See: <www.unece.org/env/pp/>.

There has been great interest in the implementation of the convention in many SEE countries, due to its progressive and unique contents. The ongoing democratisation and administrative-reform processes in these countries are in line with the necessity to implement the convention, which accounts for the levels of openness and support for the project. It has received substantial support from the country partners, as well as from the Aarhus Convention Secretariat. Aarhus focal points and NGO partners have donated their time to advise, participate in project activities and contribute to project outputs. This has created a cooperative spirit and influenced project activities in a positive way.

Development work on an implementation strategy has followed the aforementioned patterns in each country. Needs assessment reports have been prepared with recommendations for priority activities, and have been discussed by experts, NGOs and inter-ministerial working groups established to review project results and
activities. Based on the finalised needs assessments, draft work plans have been drawn up for governmental and NGO activities, which include recommended steps for the development of an implementation strategy and an action plan in each country, as well as for concrete capacity building, training, information dissemination and public awareness-raising activities.

There have been some difficulties due to elections, frequent changes of official focal points, and communication problems resulting in a temporary slowing of activities. The ongoing EU harmonisation process has been a top priority in many SEE countries. However, in some countries the issues related to convention ratification and implementation have been pushed aside, which causes delays and decreases interest. Ongoing administrative reforms (legislative, institutional or judicial) have been difficult to influence through project activities. What kind of impact and how much the proposals from this project can and will be taken into account depends on the openness, timing and other factors of ongoing projects.

The project is expected to accelerate the process of ratification and early implementation of the convention. To this extent, participating country partners rely heavily on this project. For those countries who are not yet parties to the convention, the project builds awareness about the convention and will encourage greater public involvement — thereby paving the way for ratification.

Progress so far

The project includes a combination of regional, national and local activities. Apart from the management and coordination of project activities such as steering committee meetings, the selection of local pilot projects for practical implementation of the convention, and coordination of participation of SEE experts in relevant events, only a few activities are carried out at the regional level.

National and local activities include local pilot projects, capacity-building workshops and trainings on the implementation of the convention for officials and other stakeholders. Eighty-one concept papers for local pilot projects were submitted, and eight pilot projects grants were awarded in five countries. Pilot projects are expected to:

- promote effective application of the convention in practice at the local level;
- ensure efficient public involvement into the decision-making process at the national or local level;
- develop participatory practices in the local level decision-making process;
- provide an opportunity for development (or further development) of an effective public-involvement mechanism;
- promote dialogue between all the stakeholders involved, develop good practices and democratic approaches in communities; and
- help defining activities regarding the concrete and specific process of decision making.

The pilot projects also focus on direct implementation of national legislation, and on one or more provisions of the convention. NGO representatives have been invited to participate in inter-ministerial working groups to gain direct access to discussions on interim project results and planned activities, and to represent NGO community views. Moreover, a network of NGO focal points has been enlisted in all SEE countries to ensure direct NGO involvement in the project activities, inform NGOs and ask for feedback from them on project activities and interim results, and to participate in the work of the inter-ministerial working groups and regional steering committee meetings. The focal points have developed their own work plans, established a network of communication with interested NGOs, and have had regular meetings and consultations with them on the project or convention-related activities.

An analysis was performed on capacity-building and training needs for the purpose of developing recommendations as part of the convention implementation strategy. The capacity-building/training activities include local-language workshops, seminars and training for government officials and NGOs with local trainers. Foreign experts have been recruited as reference sources and guest speakers.

As a part of capacity building, the project produces training materials, manuals, guidance materials and methodologies that can be used in the future by relevant governmental officials and NGOs. Information and public-awareness-raising materials (leaflets, brochures, citizens’ guides, electronic information networking and dissemination, etc.) are included in order to reach NGOs and the general public.

More than 1,000 people have participated in this project’s capacity-building workshops. Project participants have also become acquainted with the experience of other European countries. The Aarhus focal points and NGO focal points had a chance to attend the Aarhus Convention Meeting of Parties, Task Forces and Working Group and, as a result, have gained diverse international experience on these matters that they can apply in practice.

What comes next

Effective implementation of the strategy will occur after the project is completed, and which will contain measures and steps for continued improvements in the
Local pilot projects awarded grants:

Support the Development of Opinion Leaders in a Rural Community by Implementing the Aarhus Convention Principles — Implemented by ECO-ALPEX 024, Romania
This project seeks information regarding a dumpsite near the Chisca community, and will actively involve citizens in the local decision-making process to eliminate the landfill.

Creating Sustainable Solutions for the Elimination of Illegal Landfills Through Implementation of the Aarhus Convention — implemented by the Izgrev Environmental Association, FYR Macedonia
This project contributes to the development of policies to create sustainable solutions for the elimination of illegal landfills through public participation in the local decision-making process.

Free Access to Nuclear Information: implementing the Aarhus Convention in Romania — implemented by the Romanian Association of Nature Lovers (ARIN), Romania
This project aims at improving the capacity of the citizens to participate in decisions concerning nuclear activities in Romania by providing wider access to information and by creating a framework for discussion between different stakeholders.

Capacity Building for the Aarhus Convention at the Local Level in Romania — implemented by Earth Friends Galati, Romania
This project aims to develop capacity at the local level for implementation of the convention for local governments and NGOs, and to test these capacities within a local-level decision-making process regarding the solution of potential environmental pollution problems.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Framework for Local Strategy — implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency, Serbia and Montenegro
The project aims to ensure wider public involvement in the design and adoption of a framework for municipal waste-management strategy.

Helping People to Participate — implemented by the Greener Bourgas Foundation, Bulgaria
This project aims at building capacity at the local level and establishing a mechanism and practice for public participation through the development of a public-participation strategy in developing the municipal air-quality-management programme for the city of Burgas.

Detailed Urban Plan and SEA for the Beach Area of the City of Varna: Alternative Ways for Involving the Public in the Development of the Plan and its Subsequent Implementation — implemented by the Foundation Institute for Ecological Modernization, Bulgaria
This project aims to include all stakeholders in the decision-making process for the development of a detailed urban plan, its SEA and infrastructure planning.

Community Participation in Waste Management — implemented by the Co-Plan Center for Habitat Development, Albania
This project engages the inhabitants of Kamza, Albania in active planning and decision making with regard to waste management.

legislative and institutional framework, practices, training, capacity building and awareness raising. Many of the benefits will be subsequent to implementation of the strategy and action plan. Also, convention implementation requires not only legislative and institutional changes, but changes in the attitudes and approaches of officials and NGOs. To achieve such changes, longer, mid-term activities and efforts are needed.

Project sustainability at the national level will depend mainly on the political will of the ministries to continue implementation activities and carry out the action plan. Support or pressure from NGOs to monitor the accomplishments and realisation of the plans will also be crucial in this respect. Using project materials and funding from either donors or the countries themselves, national and local initiatives should take over responsibility for the delivery of capacity-building training sessions, information dissemination and awareness-raising activities.

Using materials prepared from this project, national and local initiatives are expected to take over the delivery of capacity-building training, information dissemination and awareness building.

The absorption capacity of governmental and NGO experts dealing with Aarhus issues limits sustainability to a certain extent, and will require a flexible approach to stay focused on current needs. Under the Aarhus process, new topics will be relevant (for example, PRTR, public participation in SEA and decision making on GMOs), which up to now have not received much emphasis. Therefore, new methodologies, guidance materials, training and capacity-building activities will be needed. Also, making an impact at both the municipal and community level is an enormous task, which this project is incapable of fully completing on its own.

When implementing a similar or follow-up project in the future it will be possible to build on the achievements of this project, the results of the needs assessments, the implementation strategy and action plans, and the materials developed during the project. The follow-up project can also build on the established NGO and governmental network. The project concept and
structure proved to be efficient to a great extent, and it will be possible to continue with those areas which are well identified in the implementation strategy and action plan but have yet to be accomplished within the current project.

It would also prove useful in a similar project if the selection and promotion of pilot projects could be preceded with training and capacity building in order to elicit project proposals of higher quality. One of the outcomes of this project is that there will be a better understanding of the convention and its implementation opportunities in practice by NGOs. However, there is a need for further capacity building/training for NGOs in some of the targeted countries for developing and implementing public participation strategies, using different tools to solve a particular environmental problem or influence decision making on controversial or polluting activities.

REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 2.2.1.
Building capacity for implementation of the Aarhus Convention

Background

Capacity building on access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision making and access to justice in environmental matters could facilitate the practical application of the convention, as well as accelerate the political process leading to the actual ratification. Also, in accordance with convention standards, the best practices on access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision making and access to justice in environmental matters should be also promoted. Even those countries which do not plan immediate ratification of the convention in the next few years could profit from this experience.

In several SEE countries the legal framework for access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision making, and access to justice in environmental matters is far from being complete. The practices in these fields are poorly developed or are in the initial phase. The officials responsible for access to environmental information, public participation and access to justice matters are often uncertain about the most efficient methods, or overwhelmed with numerous other tasks. The experience of other countries’ legislation and practices can help in developing and using more efficient and democratic mechanisms and can ultimately improve or contribute to a better and more transparent environmental decision-making process for building democratic structures. The examples of legislative measures and practices from other CEE and Western European countries, as well as the US, can demonstrate how different efficient, democratic, open, transparent (and often cost-effective) solutions work.

The project activities have been supported by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The objectives of the project are:

• to build capacity and improve efficiency and quality of government environmental decision making through a more strategic institutional and practical approach in light of the possible implementation of the Aarhus Convention;
• to enable the different stakeholders, including central and local government officials, NGOs, members of parliament and representatives of businesses to participate more efficiently in decision making on environmental matters;
• to promote the ratification and implementation of the Aarhus Convention in SEE countries; and
• to disseminate and promote the best practices of access to environmental information, public participation and access to justice in order to show the benefits of well-functioning democratic mechanisms.

Progress so far

Overall, 14 training sessions have been held in seven SEE countries. The trainings were primarily held on the local level and involved local environmental authorities, municipal businesses and NGOs. Some of the training sessions have also engaged representatives of ministries of the environment and other relevant agencies — occasionally in an expert capacity. Members of parliament, businesses and representatives of the media have also been involved.

Background training materials developed earlier under the project funded by the Danish EPA in 1999 have been used in the sessions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro. Some of these have been somewhat updated where there have been significant changes, either in needs or in legislation and practices on the national or local level. In addition, training materials have also been developed for Bulgaria and Romania — two countries that have not been covered by earlier capacity-building projects.

The training course includes extensive materials on all issues related to access to environmental information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters. In addition to using the existing legislative framework and practices of an individual country, they also demonstrate international standards and
best practices in these fields. The materials can be used for designing various training sessions based on the needs identified.

To make the trainings and materials best suited to local needs, both must be prepared on the national level by local experts.

Trainings for NGOs and authorities have explored the practical aspects of building and operating an efficient system of access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision making and access to justice in environmental matters.

An additional training session for young environmental NGO leaders was organised in Albania. The training was more focused on detailed issues of public participation, but also aimed to raise the capacity of NGOs to develop effective public participation campaigns and projects. During this additional activity, participants spent a week at REC Country Office Albania, where they have been involved in a training session, met with experts and visited government authorities and other local NGOs.

In light of the development under the Aarhus Convention PRTR Protocol over the last two years, the project also involved a component directed at capacity building and awareness raising among relevant national authorities, NGOs and industry. A roundtable was held in each country that brought all these stakeholders together to (a) explain the main features of PRTR systems, provide examples and present main discussion issues under the protocol negotiations and (b) to provide a venue for multi-stakeholder discussion on the upcoming protocol, its implications for the countries and needs on the national level with regard to implementation of The future requirements of the PRTR protocol and IPPC Directive.

What comes next

Since 1999, several trainings have been delivered in SEE on capacity-building according to Aarhus Convention implementation principles. Therefore, future capacity-building activities should concentrate on the use of everyday procedures providing for public participation. Local-level trainings that involve multi-stakeholder groups seem to prove the most efficient. Future trainings could, for example, focus on public involvement in permitting procedures, spatial planning or the organisation of NGO committees. These trainings should be based on good practices or cases from the region and present a follow-up approach so that participants will be trained in the use of available tools for public participation in concrete situations. Moreover, it would be useful if actual involvement triggered by the training should form a basis for another phase of training, thus ensuring continuity and follow-up, as well as creating good practices and precedents. To insure that capacity building indeed increases active involvement, and trust in the effectiveness of participatory and transparent processes, capacity-building activities should be based as much as possible on in-region practices.

Specific capacity-building efforts are needed for civil society, in particular for developing effective projects that apply available public-participation provisions and techniques in practice. Such efforts could include local level grants that would be focused on facilitation of public involvement, community organising and working with the local authorities in ensuring transparent and participatory process. There is, however, a major need in some of the countries in the region to assist NGOs in the development of such projects though trainings and methodology on both project development and project content.

On the national level, there are several specific priority issues on which countries might wish to focus their activities. In particular, the development of specific knowledge to implement the upcoming PRTR Protocol should be focused on training activities for government experts. This will be essential to establishing an operational system of quality control and validation of data.

### Environmental Priority Project 2.6

#### Environmental legal advocacy centres in South Eastern Europe

**Background**

Independent, non-governmental institutions of professionals, such as lawyers, are critical to “levelling the playing field” and ensuring that pluralistic dialogue and problem-solving take place in a fair and transparent manner backed up by the rule of law. On a more basic level, public confidence in post-communist institutions and methods of problem-solving will be enhanced when the public is able to see immediately the effectiveness of legal mechanisms to achieve just results, including compensation for environmental harm.

This project is a result of the initial interest shown by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania for the inclusion of environmental legal-advocacy/advisory centres among priority projects for their countries. It is hoped that discussions will lead to a developed understanding of the benefits of promoting such institutions to help solve environmental problems through civil society actors working within a rule-of-law context.

These developments coincide with progress in the development of similar institutions in CEE and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). Similar centres have been established in Armenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia and
Ukraine linked by a regional network and various international initiatives. These centres have developed in various ways — sometimes through fundamental grassroots activities, or with strong international partnerships and support. The number and variety of environmental public-advocacy centres mentioned earlier has reached a critical level, while the SEE region is opening up to international contacts and exchanges. Whereas previous such efforts had only western models to look to, interested SEE lawyers now have experiences from neighbouring countries in transition to draw from.

The Environmental Legal Advocacy/Advisory Centre (ELAAC) works on the representation of citizens’ environmental rights and interests for the resolution of disputes and achievement of solutions to concrete environmental problems. It is also engaged in training and information exchanges with corresponding institutions. ELAAC is staffed by local lawyers who offer legal services to various stakeholders. The main focus of activities will involve the provision of professional services to NGOs and the public to “level the playing field” and contribute to an atmosphere of pluralistic and fair resolution of environmental problems, backed up by the rule of law. Authorities benefit from capacity-building and training exercises, as well as alternative dispute-resolution facilitation. ELAAC is working with universities to establish an environmental-model legal clinic and organising interactive summer schools on environmental law.

The main objective of the project is to aid the establishment of pilot institutions (on the national level, but supported by regional and international networks) for the provision of independent, non-governmental environmental legal advocacy and advisory services to citizens, NGOs, authorities and other stakeholders in SEE countries. The following are needed to fulfil this objective:

- fostering increased respect for civil society and pluralistic solutions to problems by demonstrating results in concrete environmental cases;
- increasing the capacity of non-governmental actors in highly centralised societies by supporting the development of independent environmental lawyers and assisting them in providing high-quality legal services to the public;
- taking advantage of existing regional (CEE/NIS) initiatives in support of independent environmental legal advocacy/advisory centres so as to focus resources on an area of civil-society building that will have greater chances of success;
- solving concrete environmental problems through the application of international environmental legal principles, including the polluter pays principle and the principle of public participation;
- supporting early implementation of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters by enhancing the access to justice capabilities of societies in SEE; and
- extending the standardisation and institutionalisation of access to information and participatory rights and procedures backed up by the rule of law to SEE.

Progress so far

The main findings of the assessment of potential independent legal advocacy/advisory centres in SEE have been:

- a lack of fund-absorption capacity for the establishment of pilot centres;
- a need for intensive capacity-building activities for the lawyers in SEE countries for the establishment of pilot centres;
- a lack of strong demand for environmental legal advocacy/advisory services; and
- a low level of public awareness concerning environmental rights and availability of different legal tools.

The Center for Environmental Law (a pilot environmental legal-advocacy/advisory centre in Bulgaria) has been established. The centre has successfully begun a wide range of activities: initiating and undertaking court cases on behalf of citizens and/or environmental organisations; delivering training sessions targeted at legal practitioners (judges, prosecutors, attorneys), public authorities at the central and local level, and NGOs; and providing legal advice on environmental law issues, such as electromagnetic emissions. The Center's scope of work and concrete activities are described on their website at: <cep.bluelink.net>.

Concrete advocacy activities of the Center for Environmental Law include:

- legal advice for an administrative procedure to oppose the proposed amendment of a land-use plan near Varna in possible violation of legislation protecting wild birds (the case was successfully resolved in the administrative phase);
- an appeal against an EIA decision concerning a highway near Sofia, and notifying the regional prosecutor's office about entering false information in the EIA report (ongoing proceedings);
- an appeal request to cease illegal storage of hazardous waste near Elshitza (ongoing proceedings);
• five rejected appeals against EIA decisions concerning the extension of a ski area in Bansko-Pirin National Park, two of which are ongoing before the Supreme Court;
• an appeal against an EIA decision on Sofia International Airport, which was rejected on grounds of insufficient legal claims (legal standing);
• an appeal against an EIA decision on a hazardous-waste landfill located near Sofia (ongoing proceedings);
• an appeal against an EIA decision for a weapons factory. The client in this case is the local municipality demanding that the EIA decision assess the illegal storage of waste, ruled as “historical” (or, pre-1989) pollution. The clean-up and recovery costs should be covered by the state (ongoing proceedings);
• an appeal against a decision of the regional environmental inspectorate denying access to environmental information, based on inconsistencies between the general “Law on Access to Public Information” and regulations of environmental protection law; and
• investigation into whether to open a case against a factory near Elshitza.

The Environmental Advocacy Network in South Eastern Europe (EANSEE) has been created, and now includes 24 members (lawyers or environmental organisations). The network represents a forum for discussions and exchanges of experience on environmental legal advocacy/advisory services. The main network activities developed so far are:

• training sessions covering topics related mainly to the establishment and management of environmental legal advocacy/advisory centres (the training sessions are meant to provide participants with a comprehensive overview of different successful experiences in CEE and EECCA countries, with particular emphasis on the start-up process and ensuring long-term sustainability);
• two network meetings held in connection with the training sessions (providing a forum for sharing experiences on environmental legal advocacy/advisory activities undertaken by the EANSEE members, exchanges of different practices in SEE countries, and exchanges of legal tools available in the SEE countries);
• financial assistance schemes available for the implementation of concrete environmental legal advocacy/advisory activities — ELAAC small grants of up to EUR 5,000 per project (the grants currently being implemented are quite diverse: the compilation of relevant jurisprudence on environmental law in Romania; a roundtable of practitioners discussing a concrete case from a legal point of view; representing an environmental hot spot; and undertaking administrative and litigation procedures on environmental issues, etc;
• ELAAC Fellowship Awards supporting the participation of EANSEE in members to environmental legal advocacy/advisory related events. For the first Task Force Meeting on Access to Justice under the Aarhus Convention, seven EANSEE members were present — four of which were supported through this project; and
• Internships and working visits for members of the Center for Environmental Law and several EANSEE members, hosted by various institutions in Western Europe (e.g. Milieukontakt Oost Europa, the Netherlands; specialised environmental law office in Ireland) and in EECCA countries (e.g. Eco Pravo Lviv, Ukraine).

Ongoing support is provided by the REC to various EANSEE members through various means: information dissemination, guidance for the preparation of proposals under grant schemes, providing contacts of different environmental legal-advocacy organisations in different regions (i.e. CEE, EECCA) and guidance on identifying environmental legal-advocacy-related events.

What comes next

The project mainly intends to build up capacity within SEE for the delivery of environmental legal advocacy/advisory services targeted at the general public and used as a means to ensure the rule of law and democracy, both as general and immediate objectives to ensure the applicability of the Aarhus Convention provisions on access to information, participation in decision-making processes and access to justice on environmental matters.

As initially expected, in order to ensure the long-term impact necessary for establishing a pilot environmental legal advocacy/advisory centre in each of the SEE countries, the project needs to continue providing enhanced support for EANSEE members — both in capacity-building activities and financial assistance. The main lessons to be learned from this stage of the project are:

• only very committed people can, over the long run, dedicate their entire professional activity to environmental legal-advocacy/advisory activities;
• setting up a centre is a long process, and sustainability can be reached only through a lot of hard work, commitment, good management skills, strategic thinking and financial support; and
the need for environmental legal advocacy/advisory services will undergo further development. For the time being, however, the citizens of many countries are not fully aware of their rights, nor are they aware of the legal tools available for redressing their grievances. As things now stand, despite frequent violations of environmental law, there are but few requests for this kind of legal advice.

REREP PRIORITY PROJECTS 2.5.1, 2.5.2 AND 2.5.4

Strengthening environmental NGOs from South Eastern Europe

Background

In order to meet objectives of the Stability Pact and address environmental problems in SEE countries, while also focusing on democratisation and cross-border cooperation, an active and sustainable civil society (environmental NGOs in particular) is prerequisite. Strengthening the environmental movement in SEE can help to protect any remaining unspoiled natural areas, clean up damaged areas and prevent the disturbance of new areas. It can also assist the development of strong environmental legislation compatible with European Union standards, promote the advancement of civil society, and help to encourage public participation in environmental decision making in different regional and international processes.

In order to meet the identified needs for developing the environmental NGOs in SEE, a set of projects have been implemented by the REC with support from several donors: the United States Environmental Protection Agency, German Federal Ministry for Development and Cooperation (through its implementing agency, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation [GTZ]), and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Netherlands. The projects supporting NGOs described here were supported through generous contribution of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Commission, and the US EPA. In addition, the SEEEN development project has been supported by the Netherlands and the European Commission. Moreover, the project on development of public participation practices in SEE (implemented in 1999-2000 and contributing to the meeting of REReP principles) has enjoyed supported from Denmark.

The projects have responded directly to the training needs of SEE NGOs (by providing direct assistance and developing NGOs guides in basic skills), enabled networking and cooperation (by establishing the South Eastern European Environmental NGOs Network — SEEENN), and provided financial support to SEE NGOs to strengthen their capacity and increase cooperation, while addressing concrete cross-border environmental problems.

The following fields of activity and project topics were accepted under the REReP Local Grants Programme:

- organisation and implementation of national NGO gatherings to discuss the REReP Stability Pact and to establish a common platform of national NGO cooperation;
- establishment and maintenance of a national NGO focal point for REReP and SEE environmental reconstruction;
- dissemination of information related to REReP and SEE environmental reconstruction; and
- exemplary projects contributing to the broader objectives of REReP (including project preparation).

Progress so far

With project support from the US EPA, seven NGO guides have been developed under the series called Developing the Skills of NGOs, which are available in seven SEE languages and English. The guides are meant to serve as training materials on the following topics (as identified by REC country offices, based on their understanding of NGO needs):

- environmental right-to-know activities;
- development of local environmental action plans;
- proposal writing;
- project management;
- public education to raise environmental awareness;
- presentation and communication skills; and
- project monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, training has been provided to NGOs in five SEE countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro). More than 100 environmental NGO activists have been trained in proposal writing, public education, campaigning, project management, public participation in local environmental action plans, project budgeting and defining mission statements. Between two and four topics were addressed in each country, depending on the needs expressed by NGOs.

One of the outcomes of the first regional meeting of environmental NGOs from SEE is the establishment of the regional SEEENN network. Its purpose is to initiate
long-term processes for, organise and facilitate the implementation of specific tasks given by its member NGOs and the broader public in the region. The network is currently used as a forum for discussing the present political situation in SEE, as well as for coordinating NGO efforts to contribute to the reconstruction of the SEE region in a sustainable manner. The REC, with financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Environment, financed the first two years of network activities and facilitated its organisational set-up and institutional development. The network now counts over 20 members in all seven SEE countries.

Within REReP, the NGO Granting Programme was also developed with the aim of rebuilding and supporting the environmental NGO movement and civil society development in SEE. Furthermore, this grant programme seeks to enhance NGO cooperation on key environmental issues, and by doing so, to improve the state of the environment and contribute to political stability in the region as a whole. Project implementation was possible thanks to support from the German Ministry for Cooperation and Development.

Eleven NGO cooperative projects were awarded a grant in 2002 and are now in the first phase of implementation. Total grant amounts exceed EUR 280,000. Thirty NGOs are involved in the projects, which are broken down by country as follows: Albania-1; Bosnia and Herzegovina-2; Bulgaria-10; Croatia-3; FYR Macedonia-3; Romania-4; and Serbia and Montenegro-7.

Although cooperation has taken place through SEEENN, and also within the awarded projects, it is still limited in terms of the number of NGOs involved and the type of cooperation. Ethnic-based conflicts and a lack of trans-boundary cooperation have posed the most problems, and need to be addressed and resolved.

What comes next

The need for continuing NGO support is as compelling today as it was in 1999 at the very start-up of REReP. Changes in societal structure take time, and results are not always immediately apparent. Further efforts to support NGOs should be made at both the regional and national level.

The demand for financial support is extremely high throughout all SEE countries. Absorption capacity, however, is still limited, and good-quality NGO projects are difficult to identify. In addition, several key NGO support activities have yet to be funded under the “quick start” phase. They include a programme of long-term support to build viable NGO institutions and promote capacity building via lobbying and campaigning.

In addition, progress has been noted since the establishment of SEEENN. However, the network has to take further steps to broaden its membership base and increase its work and credibility.

The need for training and assistance remains extremely high in the SEE countries. For NGOs to become more professional and able to perform in a competitive environment, more funding and direct assistance targeted at capacity building should be provided. More environmental NGOs are emerging every year in SEE countries, which is evidence of civil-society development. These NGOs need adequate training in areas like proposal writing, project management, strategic planning and campaigning.

Also, the work that started under the Developing the Skills of NGOs series needs to be continued. The plan now is to expand this series and produce guides on new topics that refer to capacity building, both for NGOs and individuals (e.g. organisational and personal development). Possible topics under consideration are:

- financial and organisational self-sustainability;
- campaigning skills and strategies;
- strategic planning;
- advocacy and lobbying;
- the role of environmental NGOs in the community;
- human-resource management for NGOs;
- leadership;
- marketing for environmental NGOs; and
- development of business plans.

Financial and organisational self-sustainability represents one of the main priorities. At a time when the financial resources for NGOs are changing, NGOs in the Balkans must assess and strengthen their organisational readiness to plan for and initiate self-financing activities. Self-financing activities will give NGOs the opportunity to supplement their project grants and donations.
**Electronic networking of NGOs in South Eastern Europe**

**Background**

The South Eastern European environmental movement is characterised by the presence of numerous small — often geographically dispersed — organisations. While these organisations may have a limited impact on society if they work separately, their overall strength may be dramatically improved if they rely on the Internet as a strategic communications tool to coordinate and unify their efforts. This project supports the creation of formal NGO communication networks as a proven institutional framework to maximise the benefits of this communications tool.

Detailed information about this project can be found on the Balkan Bytes webpage, which includes full information on the project's background, activities, results, products, and partners. It can be found at: [www.rec.org/REC/Programs/SEE_Networking/](http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/SEE_Networking/).

The project team sincerely thanks the project funders: the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and the Ministry of Environment of Italy.

**Progress so far**

Following two years of on-field activities, the project has received favourable responses from various sources, and was praised as a catalyst for improving cross-border and national-level environmental cooperation. This positive feedback is partly attributed to meticulous project preparation, which determined project implementation along these key principles: NGO ownership, cooperation, democracy and transparency, content focus, a cross-border approach, and long-term network sustainability.

One way to make sure that these electronic networks continue functioning after the end of the project is to foster NGO motivation and a sense of ownership over these networks. It is for this reason that NGOs plan and implement most of their own project activities, which are then documented in detail in each network's work-plan. These documents — along with all other project-related information — are publicly available on the project website.

Examples of activities in these documents include:

- computer training programmes;
- strategic planning workshops;
- online news-publishing seminars;
- distribution of computer hardware;
- exchange programmes and study visits;
- online content development;
- maintenance of environmental mailing lists; and
- preparation of network newsletters.

Another important factor that contributed to the success of the main project phase was the implementation of project start-up activities. These included the establishment of the project's management framework (such as national and international NGO coalitions), the delivery of a detailed needs assessment and its publication in the book *Networks at Work*, the invitation of all NGOs to these networks and the development of project implementation guidelines. Based on the information collected via the needs-assessment project, activities were planned in detail and then implemented.

From the very beginning of project activities, various workshops played a key role in the project. These ranged from strategic planning workshops (for example, to agree on a work plan of activities or to allocate network member responsibilities) to specific training workshops (e.g. on-line news publishing or software usage). These events took place on the national level, as well as every year on the international level. The regional meetings were an excellent forum for learning from each other, coordinating activities and planning future collaboration. The first regional meeting was held by the experienced Bluelink network in Sofia, Bulgaria. In only one year's time, NGOs in almost all SEE countries have established electronic networks. Therefore, as a symbolic gesture to acknowledge their progress, the second regional meeting was hosted by a newly born network: Sharri.Net in Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration).

A central communication tool for each network is represented by electronic mailing lists. By now, almost all SEE countries have launched such lists, significantly increasing the timeliness and amount of exchanged information. The national-level mailing lists (running in local languages) are complemented by an English-language international list, in which all network representatives are members. Mailing lists are frequently used to promote campaigns such as the Save Pirin Mountain campaign in Bulgaria or the Earth Day campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to the better reaction time and increased organisational capacity, mailing lists have helped South Eastern European networks implement new joint projects, such as a regional environmental news-sharing initiative. The number of messages sent on these mailing lists has increased rapidly; in some cases reaching annual numbers well over 1,000.

Besides taking advantage of electronic mail, most networks have also launched a website. These present
not only information relevant to the environmental movement itself, but also facilitate dialogue with other stakeholders, as well as the wider range of society. Online content ranges from dynamic information (discussion forums and fresh environmental news) to more permanent ones (reference materials, address lists, publications and legislation). Similar to mailing lists, these individual network websites (primarily in local languages) are complemented and connected by the English-language international project website.

Fresh environmental news is one of the most popular sections of these network websites. Action Applications software makes it very easy for anyone to post news articles through the use of on-line forms. Networks that have installed this standard news-publishing software can easily exchange news articles among their websites — significantly improving the flow of cross-border information. One successful network is Romania’s StrawberryNet <www.ngo.ro>.

While NGO campaigns often conflict with economic interests as a result of more efficient communication and more pronounced public exposure, an increasing number of campaigns are able to achieve their goals. Recent examples from Romania include the withdrawal of a World Bank investment into the controversial Rosia Montana gold mine, the relocation of the “Drakula” theme park from a pristine landscape, and a ban on otter killing.

Because a lack of computer equipment was identified as one of the key obstacles to an efficient on-line network, the project successfully filled this void — depending on specific local needs, workstations were installed in the offices of network coordinators or active network members. In one case, an NGO Internet Cafe was built, which — in addition to its main role of providing Internet access — has become a lively community centre. Up to now, about 20 computers have been distributed to NGOs, efficiently catalysing the national and regional networking process.

International information exchange and cooperation has increased significantly since the start of the project. This can be measured by the increasing frequency of international study visits, the presence of foreign partners at various workshops, participation at regional events, and a regular on-line exchange of information. Despite the brief history of SEE environmental electronic networks, this intense cross-border interaction has already attracted significant international media exposure, such as television and radio interviews and on-line and print-news articles. All media coverage can be accessed from the project website.

What comes next

As mentioned earlier, from the very beginning the project was planned in a way so that supported networks will continue to exist even when project funding has come to an end. For this reason, a continuously increasing share of project tasks are implemented by the NGO networks themselves. Only through a sense of ownership and consequent NGO self-motivation can these networks function successfully over the long run.

Another important future priority is the need to diversify funding sources. This goal is envisaged to be achieved in two ways: through continuously improving the capacity of networks (quality of work), as well as reaching a critical mass that can balance out fluctuations in funding (quantity of work).

Besides focusing on the long-term sustainability of NGO networks in RERP beneficiary countries, the feasibility of extending to other countries will be also explored. Target countries include neighbouring or close countries, such as Turkey and Greece.

REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 2.1

Regional Environmental Press Centre for South Eastern Europe: better environmental news coverage for stronger environmental public awareness and participation

Background

In the process of political, economic and social changes in SEE since 1989, the media has been the major channel of information on environmental issues to the public. Such information is essential for true public participation in environmental decision making — a crucial component in the process of strengthening democracy and building up civil society.

An initiative for improving the quality of environmental media reporting in SEE was undertaken to assist in solving environmental problems, and developing democracy and civil society. A Regional Environmental Press Centre (REPC) — a network of resource points to provide services, information and training for environmental journalists throughout SEE — was developed.

The project was implemented with generous financial support for the Netherlands.

Progress so far

To be able to initiate the actual development of REPC and its services, it was essential to obtain specific knowledge on environmental reporting. For this reason, a survey was carried out (in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo — territory under interim UN administration) to study the difficul-
ties that journalists face, to assess their needs and to gather suggestions for improving their work. The survey results are presented in the report on information, networking and training for improved environmental news reporting. Conclusions of the report define the three main areas where environmental journalists feel a need for assistance. In this way the three main pillars of REPC work were determined. The full text of the report is available on-line at <media.rec.org>.

REPC was created as a network operating throughout the SEE region. Its main office is in Skopje, FYR Macedonia and is hosted by the Environmental Press Centre. The resource points throughout the rest of the SEE countries are hosted by environmental or media organisations with previous experience in assisting environmental journalists. REPC offers high-quality referenced information on time to environmental journalists from alternative sources.

With support from REPC, journalists can write better stories. The REPC resource points offer general information, as well as a question-and-answer service to the media. They assist journalists in researching environmental topics by linking them with relevant experts or NGOs. A major medium for the information and services offered by the REPC is the website at <www.repc.net>.

The tip sheet with environmental stories, SEE Environment Watch, is published every two weeks and distributed to over 150 journalists throughout SEE and beyond. The electronic newsletter also offers sources and editorial tips on covering SEE environmental issues at: <www.repc.net/tipsheet/subscribe.html>.

One of the useful services offered by the REPC is its database of expert contacts. The database contains more than 400 expert contacts from all SEE countries. It is updated electronically and available on-line at: <www.repc.net/databases/media.html>.

Training for journalists is another key activity of REPC. An international training workshop was held in Ohrid, FYR Macedonia in spring 2003. SEE media participants were offered hands-on environmental journalism training, which was provided by leading trainers and journalists from CEE and the UK. The training covered various aspects of environmental reporting, investigative techniques, dealing with expert and NGO sources, and coping with external and internal pressure. It was also a venue for experience-sharing between Western and CEE journalists and their SEE colleagues.

Roughly 100 journalists have registered and started using the services of REPC within the first year of project implementation. Various news media throughout the region have posted materials and articles, acknowledging the as a source for their stories. Governmental press offices and NGOs have expressed satisfaction with the work of REPC and participated in some of its activities in different countries.

What comes next

It is clear that there is much more work to be done to make the environment an equally attractive and covered topic for editors, reporters and SEE citizens. More efforts are planned in environmental media training at the regional and national level. Possible partners for REPC have been identified, such as the WWF, the Guardian Foundation in the UK, the Independent Media Centre network throughout SEE, and, naturally, any existing associations of environmental journalists.

The Bulletin: an illustrated quarterly magazine

Background

The Bulletin, published quarterly by the REC, addresses a broad range of environmental issues, including nature protection, biodiversity, climate change, energy, environmental legislation and policies, as well as significant activities of civil society and private industry. More than half of the Bulletin's readers are from the environmental stakeholder groups in CEE and SEE — the others being donors, governments, institutions and individuals from Western Europe, North America and Japan. Written in English, it remains a unique publication that speaks to and for the environmental stakeholders in CEE.

The purpose of the Bulletin is to improve free access to relevant environmental information in CEE and SEE in order to support public participation in environmental decision making, increase public environmental awareness, and improve and expand environmental journalism that helps to identify environmental hotspots that have occurred as a result of recent conflicts.

The Bulletin is produced based on a wealth of information resources, knowledge and contacts related to the environment in the SEE and CEE. The project contributes to regional environmental protection, stability and integration with the rest of Europe.

The project was implemented with generous financial support of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Progress so far

The project aimed to produce a quarterly magazine distributed to environmental stakeholders in CEE and SEE and beyond. Five-thousand copies of the Bulletin are
What comes next

The goal is to make the Bulletin a critical voice and reliable source of information on environmental issues in CEE and SEE. The content of the magazine will be focused on sustainable development. It will draw heavily on the expertise of a broad network of contributors to provide a critical look at activities affecting the environment in CEE and SEE. Special attention will be paid to its visual and graphic content. Charts, diagrams, photographs and illustrations will complement the magazine’s content. The development of a sustainable self-financing mechanism to offset some of the magazine’s publication costs is a priority. This mechanism will be developed over the next two years and include several distinct measures to establish subscription fees and a cover price, and to develop a campaign to attract advertising.
The promotion of regional cooperation, including cross-border initiatives, is at the heart of the REReP concept. All REReP activities and projects are based on this understanding. The assistance provided within the areas of institution- and civil-society building is implemented through regional dialogue and cooperation and cross-border exchanges. However, within REReP there are projects that support cross-border cooperation through targeted specific environmental protection activities. This is especially valid for the protection of shared natural resources.

Despite the fact that projects falling within priority areas of institution building and support for environmental civil society have attracted — for the most part — international assistance, activities regarding the promotion of cross-border cooperation and reducing biodiversity and environmental health threats are vital for the further strengthening of regional cooperation and environment protection in the SEE.

Based on the assistance provided within REReP up to now, there has been significant growth in the capacity of SEE’s environmental institutions and accelerated progress in civil-society building. There will be a marked increase in the number of cross-border initiatives in the years to come.

**REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 4.3.23**

**Promotion of cross-border cooperation, networking and exchanges in South Eastern Europe**

**Background**

Nature protection and management are themes particularly well adapted to the promotion of exchanges between SEE countries. They provide grounds for collaboration by bridging ethnic and religious differences and developing civil society. In the context of its participation in the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Switzerland, represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), provided support to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro for developing and reinforcing the capacities and networks in the field of biodiversity. Three pilot cross-border sites of high conservation significance, located in marginal regions with low economic development, have been selected: Neretva Delta (Ramsar site), shared by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia; Skadar lake (Ramsar site), shared by Albania, and Serbia and Montenegro; and West Stara Planina (shared by Bulgaria, and Serbia and Montenegro). The goal of the project is to enhance cooperation between SEE countries through the management of shared natural resources. This was the first project to be implemented in SEE following the endorsement of REReP and the list of priority projects.

**Progress so far**

“Get everyone involved” meetings and priority-setting workshops were held in each of the cross-border sites to facilitate an open and transparent discussion among local stakeholders and relevant central government agencies, scientific institutions, and NGOs about the status, threats, and actions needed to conserve Cross-border Sites biodiversity. Joint expert teams from both countries sharing the CBS carried out an assessment of the current situation of the biodiversity and natural resources in all sites. Assistance has been provided to standardise resource-data-collection methods and forms of sharing information, and to develop relevant joint publications and planning joint research activities. Capacity-building events and exchanges of experience and information were carried out on national and regional levels, including assistance in drafting project proposals. A needs assessment was carried out to identify the basic needs of environmental and nature-conservation organisations. Local schools were engaged in environmental discussions, and contacts were established with ministries of science and education in Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. A variety of cultural events brought together local communities from CBS, such as festivals, exchange visits for youth, children’s drawings and the joint celebration of a “Wetlands Day.” A joint cross-border newsletter was published for Skadar/Shkodra Lake to keep local people informed about developments underway. A database of key stakeholders in all cross-border sites was established, and has been available since the beginning of the project. In order to fill information gaps regarding cross-border site biodiversity,
project results were widely disseminated at both the regional and national level. (See Figure 1)

In order to promote cooperation in the management and protection of key trans-boundary sites, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Ministry of Environment of Montenegro and the Albanian National Environmental Agency (now Ministry of Environment).

For the first time, joint base-line studies have been conducted in three cross-border sites: socio-economic analysis, a survey of water resources, a survey of forest practices, a biodiversity bibliography and a list of priority habitats and species. The information was widely circulated through project websites and a CD-ROM.

The first Joint Report on Risks and Potentials of Lake Skadar and a joint biodiversity map of Lake Shkodra were prepared in collaboration with experts from sev-
eral research and academic institutions from Serbia and Montenegro, and Albania.

A joint rural-tourism strategy has been drafted with the participation of 75 stakeholders from the Neretva Delta, ministries of tourism and agriculture, small and medium sized enterprises from Croatia, and relevant governmental bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The work has attracted high praise from local communities and the media. Regular meetings took place between environmental-protection ministry officials from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro in order to plan and exchange experience.

For the promotion of local organisations and cross-border exchanges between local organisations and people interested in shared resource management, more than 50 stakeholders from the Neretva Delta and Skadar Lake were trained in project-proposal drafting, with a special focus on bilateral cooperation and building a partnership between NGOs and local public bodies.

First-time representatives of local schools from Neretva Delta and Skadar Lake were brought together for a discussion on joint approaches to education, and a joint educational package for local teachers from Neretva Delta is being prepared. On the basis of a needs assessment, technical assistance to local schools will be provided.

Workshops on organic food were organised to train local people in sustainable agriculture, providing training materials for Neretva Delta and elaborating an action plan for priority measures for sensitive wetlands in the Neretva Delta.

On the basis of a needs assessment of the environmental authorities in Skadar Lake, technical assistance was provided to Skadar Lake National Park (Serbia and Montenegro) and Hutovo Blato Nature Park (Bosnia and Herzegovina) to meet priority needs in carrying out their daily duties. Basic equipment was provided to the regional environmental inspectorate in Shkodra (Albania). In addition, a joint directory of local NGOs was published.

Through the small grants scheme, projects of local organisations (NGOs, professional associations, academic institutions and local authorities) were awarded to carry out joint activities in cross-border sites focused on biodiversity protection and the sustainable use of natural resources. NGOs implemented more than 30 cross-border-site environmental projects (e.g. a public-awareness campaign concerning lake value, campaigning against bird poaching, protected species of lake flora and fauna, educational materials, brochures and video materials). In addition, there were public debates, workshops, seminars, presentations and a gathering of representatives from various public institutions, companies, other stakeholders and the general public.

To enhance the promotion of the technical networks at the regional level, and to lend support to the effective management of selected trans-boundary sites, available data on biodiversity (species) were systematically collected and organised into a common biodiversity database in order to provide the basis for future monitoring and the red-listing of endangered species.

Cross-border advisory boards, representing local stakeholders in each country sharing a cross-border site, were established to lead and advise on project implementation through the development of joint work plans for relevant sites.

The project has successfully initiated multi-stakeholder dialogue. It has managed to raise levels of awareness and opened up discussion on issues related to nature protection and biodiversity conservation, which so far have not been discussed among stakeholders and the general population. This is a significant achievement that is of great value and importance for any further development of strategies, plans or measures in each of these sites. The current project also has the strong support of local stakeholders, which is something that citizens care a great deal about. As a result, the project has established a number of trans-boundary stakeholder networks (local scientists, teachers, experts and NGOs).

What comes next

An external evaluation of the project was accomplished in late 2002 to assess project results, which resulted in a recommendation to continue the project. Ministries of environment from relevant countries and local stakeholders also strongly support its continuation.

For the time being, the project is focused on the development of strategies and action plans for the future development and protection of the three cross-border sites. The established multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation will largely be put to use for discussions and official approval of these important documents in the second half of 2003. Future activities will likely be based on agreed upon strategies and action plans.

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REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 4.3.23.2

Transpark: golden gates of the Danube

Background

With regard to events that occurred in the Balkan region in the last decade, it has become more and more necessary to take advantage of any opportunities for cooperation among countries in the region. Environmental protection (especially biodiversity) is not just one country’s responsibility. This commonly shared responsibility sometimes offers the best opportunity to establish a strong and efficient cooperation mechanism among different countries.
The opportunity to apply cooperative, cross-border environmental protection activities is particularly good in Djerdap National Park and Iron Gates Park located on the Danube River. The two parks are separated by the Danube: Iron Gates Park is under Romanian jurisdiction, while Djerdap National Park is under Serbian jurisdiction. UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere programme recognises the importance of establishing a trans-boundary biosphere reserve when ecosystems extend beyond national boundaries, in order to avoid different or conflicting management and land-use practices. The project was implemented from November 2001 to November 2002 and is funded by the German government.

Progress so far

The first activity under the project, the Regional Working Group of Romanian and Serbian Members, was established in February 2002. It assessed, among other issues, the current situation in both protected areas with regard to administrative structures, legislative frameworks and other initiatives related to the area. It also considered steps towards the creation of a Trans-Boundary Biosphere Reserve under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere programme, which facilitates efficient communication and cooperation on both sides and coordinates for the implementation of joint programmes and access to current international and regional initiatives.

Afterwards, round-table meetings were conducted in both countries. The aim of the round-tables was to identify common problems based on needs assessments and various recommendations. Romania has managed to attain a "vegetation map" for the park area — creating a habitat inventory according to the EU Habitat Directive. A pest inventory was developed to determine the state of the park’s ecosystem. Human impact on the park was also measured.

The Serbian national round-table was dedicated to the Transpark project concentrated on improving the quality of environmental protection of the Danube River and its adjacent gorge. It also aims to facilitate a common trans-boundary administration-management system for the two national parks on each side of the Danube River. It was decided that these aims could be achieved by incorporating the Transpark idea into the Regional Development Plan for two counties in Romania. The Transpark plan should not only be part of the local environmental action plan, but joint activities should include the organisation of a media campaign for:

- promoting the park on either side of the Danube;
- improving communication and information channels between the two parks;
- assigning administrative staff responsible for maintaining contact between the two parks and their respective local communities; and encouraging cooperation between NGOs from both countries within the same area of interest.

Moreover, the following steps that can be taken to designate the area as a “trans-boundary protected area” were identified: designation of priorities that are required for the area to become a trans-boundary biosphere reservation, and creation of a common land use strategy for both areas.

Two training seminars for national park staff-members were organised. In Romania, the focus was on park administration and on presenting the most up-to-date European Union environmental policies and funding sources. In Serbia, the focus of the training was joint action concerning environmental protection and conservation of the area. This provided a basis for planning and realising coordinated activities, including Recommendations for the Establishment and Functioning of Transboundary Biosphere Reserves.

Posting information on the Internet is an effective way to disseminate information about the two parks, and the project as a whole. The webpage is available in three languages (English, Serbian and Romanian). Information in English is available at: <www.recyu.org/eng/projects/transpark/trans_index.htm>.

What comes next

Recent tourism developments have shown that tourist areas often suffer from a string of environmental problems resulting directly or indirectly from the tourist phenomenon itself: impoverishment of the landscape, contamination, excessive consumption of resources and energy, the alteration of natural life, territorial and demographic imbalance or social problems, etc. On the other hand, tourism offers a unique means of raising environmental awareness among the general public. It also represents a valuable opportunity to support traditional economic activities and improve the quality of life in these areas. Therefore, the future cooperation of both countries under the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve could bring the development of eco-tourism to the centre of attention through a consultative process which takes into consideration the opinions of concerned citizens and other stakeholders for the promotion of eco-tourism principles and good practices.
While formulating REReP priorities, SEE countries identified the following specific components that are important for meeting goals in this area: development and revision of national environmental action plans to create a strategy for the development of local environmental action plans; capacity building of local municipalities; and local sustainable development and elimination of major environmental hazards. Projects within the last two fields attracted international support and are discussed below. More progress in this area is expected following REReP implementation.

**REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 5.3**

**Development of project-preparation capacity for environmental investment projects in small and medium-sized municipalities**

**Background**

After a decade of political, administrative, and financial decentralisation of authority in SEE countries, the primary responsibility for preparing, implementing, and maintaining environmental investment projects now belongs to local and regional governments. Development of Project Preparation Capacity for Environmental Investment Projects is an important project within the REReP package that addresses a problem that SEE governments and other stakeholders consistently cite as an obstacle to environmental improvement: the capacity to attract and absorb environmental investment funds at the local and regional level.

The project was implemented with generous financial support of the Netherlands.

Small and medium-sized municipalities (in most countries, all but the three largest cities) bear significant responsibility for environmental protection in SEE countries, primarily through the management of local infrastructure, such as solid-waste collection and disposal systems, water supplies and wastewater treatment. Throughout SEE, the municipalities in charge of managing this infrastructure are in need of know-how, expertise, training — and, especially — the capital to upgrade, repair and construct new systems. Some capital is available, but it often goes unused because local project proponents (local and regional authorities, public utilities and public/private enterprises) lack the capacity to identify, formulate, and prepare sustainable, rational investment projects that meet the requirements of available financing sources.

**Progress so far**

This project focuses on improving the capacity of SEE countries to identify and prepare small and medium-sized environmental infrastructure projects (total investment costs between EUR 500,000 and 1 million) at the local government level. The target beneficiaries are local authorities, local public enterprises in charge of managing municipal infrastructure, and selected local consulting companies that supply technical and financial expertise to investment project preparation. This project operates in two SEE countries (Romania, and Serbia and Montenegro) as a pilot project. Project achievements are as follows:

- Nine environmental investment projects and 14 project-development consulting firms in Romania and Serbia and Montenegro were selected through transparent process.
- Two four-day workshops were held to train local authorities, public utilities, and local consultants on key aspects of environmental-investment project preparation for external financing. The workshops were conducted by a project team consisting of technical, financial, and institutional experts from CEE and SEE countries. Topics at the interactive workshops included an overview of project-cycle management, strategic considerations for water and waste projects, building successful project teams (cooperation between local authorities and outside experts, a logical-framework approach to the project, feasibility analysis), technical, financial, environmental, stakeholder and institutional components, project-implementation planning and communicating the results of project-preparation processes.
- Local consulting companies were contracted to work with local authorities to prepare full feasibility analyses and supporting documentation, including...
financing applications where appropriate for each of the nine selected investment projects.

- The project team worked with the teams of local authorities and consultants to ensure smooth cooperation and review/commenting on draft project documentation.

- In Romania, three financing applications were prepared for small wastewater infrastructure and SAPARD programmes. Two preliminary applications are underway: the EU European Bank for Reconstruction and Development’s (EBRD) programme for small and medium municipalities and Phare Cross-Border Cooperation programmes.

- In Serbia, four project feasibility studies have undergone preparation for larger investments in solid-waste management and disposal, in agreement with national-level solid-waste management strategy.

In terms of capacity building, the project not only introduced participants to new concepts in project preparation that are required for international funding, but also provided them with specific, easy-to-use tools to enable them to integrate these concepts into their work. The training workshops were carefully designed to focus on those aspects of project preparation for which SEE authorities and experts are traditionally weak: financial and economic analysis; social and institutional aspects; strategic problem solving; and the use of planning and communication tools. Special emphasis was given to communicating the results of analyses to outsiders, and to the importance of proper cooperation between local authorities and consultants.

Capacity building was strengthened considerably by the opportunity to immediately put new skills to use by preparing concrete environmental projects. The project required participants to think of investment projects as holistic, integrated solutions to local environmental problems, rather than just technical designs. During project preparation, local consultants were required to analyse one or more alternative solutions to environmental problems, and justify which proposed project represents the best solution from all perspectives. For most project participants (both consultants and local authorities), the concept of justifying the solution from the perspective of a potential financing source was a new approach.

In addition to preparing project documentation, the REC project team is working with local project proponents to assess options for financing these investment projects. In Romania, which is an EU accession country, the team did its best to select projects that were eligible for the pre-accession grant financing programmes available in that country. While local consultants have been able to successfully prepare the financing applications for these programmes, there has been some difficulty regarding cooperation between team members—related mostly to administrative tasks that must be completed by the local authority in order to submit applications. In Serbia and Montenegro, which is not an EU accession country, the availability of financing for local environmental investments is coordinated by national authorities, mainly through the upcoming priority environmental investment programme. It is clear for both countries, however, that local authorities lack adequate information about these financing opportunities and must therefore rely either on consultants, ad-hoc regional and national-level contacts, or donor-funded organisations like the REC to steer them in the right direction.

What comes next

Capacity-building for the development of environmental investment projects is a critical need for SEE local and regional authorities and local consultants to prepare high-quality projects that can attract financing and successfully meet local environmental priorities and objectives. Training must focus on the need to communicate all elements of investment in a clear, consistent manner, as well as to justify to an outside evaluator that the proposed project is feasible and optimal from technical, financial, economic, social, institutional, and environmental perspectives. The experience from this REReP project has shown that project proponents (both authorities and consultants) are still unaccustomed to focusing on the quality of written output when developing a project. Until recently it was not necessary to justify the need for financing to outside evaluators. Both local authorities and local consultants need training that emphasises quality project management, team building, and results-oriented cooperation.

This REReP project was designed as a pilot project to focus on selected environmental investment projects and prepare them for financing. The project focused on pre-formulated environmental investment projects that were already on national-level priority lists. While this enabled the project to quickly achieve concrete output in terms of investment ready for evaluation by financing sources, it has overlooked the need for SEE local authorities to formulate investment projects based on realistic environmental investment strategies.

Experience from this REReP project has shown that SEE local authorities typically have strong ideas about their investment needs, but they rarely have clear, targeted strategies to address the needs, and they are often unaware of the financing opportunities available to meet their needs. In cases where they are aware of the existence of funds, they still lack understanding of what is required to access the funds in terms of financing...
applications and coordination with national/regional authorities. This proved especially true in Serbia and Montenegro where local authorities still have limited institutional ability to access funding independently.

In this sense, the best way forward would be for more SEE local authorities (and selected local project-development consultants) to receive targeted assistance in both strategic environmental investment planning and individual investment preparation. Such assistance would enable the preparation of local environmental investment strategies that would complement and feed into the priority environmental investment programmes developed under REReP 1.2. At the same time, local authorities would learn about the financing options available to them and the specific requirements they must fulfil in order to access financing. At that point, specific environmental investment projects should be targeted for high-quality preparation by trained local consultants, both as a capacity-building exercise and investment-preparation service.

It is clear from the statements of REReP delegates from the SEE countries that environmental investment is a top priority and the only way to ultimately address severe environmental problems in the region. At the same time, it is also evident that there are still significant capacity needs among those SEE authorities and experts who must prepare, implement, and manage the required investments. Without such capacity, the investments simply cannot be made.

**REREP PRIORITY PROJECT 4.3.26**

**Pilot project on rapid environment and health-risk assessment in the lower and mean Danube River Basin**

**Background**

The Pilot Project on Rapid Environment and Health-Risk Assessment (REHRA) in the Lower and Mean Danube River Basin was initiated as a response to the January 2000 cyanide spill into the Tisza River, and was easily translated into a REReP objective to reduce threats to environmental health. The spill occurred in Baia Mare, Romania, and had international impact. In the hours, days and weeks after the spill it became obvious that new tools and methods had to be developed and used in the region for collecting, processing and disseminating information on rapid assessment of industrial risks to environment and health, as well as on emergency response. These tools and methods needed to be developed in view of the needs of both environmental or public health authorities and the general public.

The software for rapid risk assessment by the aforementioned authorities in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania was to be adapted and promoted under this project. In addition, the REC performed a survey on the public’s perception of risks in the three countries.

The project component on public participation was implemented with generous financial support of Italy.

**Progress so far**

The project aims to implement easy-to-use and flexible software tools to evaluate hazardous industrial sites, rapidly assess relevant risks to environment and health, indicate suitable emergency responses, and provide public information and opportunities for participation.

First, an evidence-based methodology for rapid risk assessment was developed, based on existing tools and subjected later to on-site testing.

Second, the software for rapid risk assessment was adapted to the needs of each country, along with user manuals. It involved site visits for gathering the information needed to develop the software. Information obtained at site hazard levels, past accidents the general environmental and health situation within site vicinities, and the public perception of risks. During work on the REHRA software, preparatory meetings and translation consultations in the countries with country representatives and software developers have been organised.

Third, environment and public health authorities have been introduced to the software and trained in its use in each country. Consultations and training sessions were organised by country partners (ministries of environment in Bulgaria and Romania, and the Institute of Environmental Health in Hungary) and REC country offices. The software is now accessible enough for authorities to apply locally, and has been rated a very useful tool that is based on sound methodology.

As a basis for the public-participation component of the REHRA project, the REC’s head office prepared a questionnaire on public perceptions of risk to environment and health. It has been translated into local languages by the REC country offices. The questionnaire includes questions on the general profile of the respondent; knowledge of industries operating in the area, industrial activities, dangerous substances and past accidents; accessibility of environment- and health-risk-related information; and emergency information. Respondents have also been asked about the quality of the information itself, and about how the information is circulated.

The main findings of the survey on public perception of the risks to environment and health are provided below. The survey was taken from among randomly sampled families living within the vicinity of industrial sites that were also test sites for the application of REHRA software.
The questions asked during the survey had to do with the accessibility of environmental and health information; awareness of hazardous substances or their components; dangerous industrial activities and past accidents; and the impact of industry on the environment.

The survey in Bulgaria indicates that up to 70 percent of the public had sufficient knowledge of industrial operations, but access to environmental information needs to be improved at all sites. The chemical industry is seen as the main potential hazard, and the government is seen as the main information provider.

The survey in Hungary indicates that anywhere from 56 to 84 percent of the public does not believe that industry adequately safeguards the environment and human health. The public generally sees specific industries (e.g. the chemical industry) that operate in their vicinity as more dangerous than other industrial activities. The Hungarian public has sufficient knowledge of past accidents and believes that there is a medium-level risk of future accidents. In addition, the public recognises relevant authorities as responsible for providing information, but gathers most of its information from the mass media.

The survey in Romania indicates that around 70 percent of the public does not feel adequately informed about the state of the environment, health or industrial hazards or risks. Awareness of industrial risks to environment and health was generally higher among those aged between 26-50, and among those with a university education. The same age group sees industry as potential information providers, while older people emphasised the role of authorities. The mass media are important environmental information providers for all respondents. Young and middle-aged respondents underline the role of NGOs in this respect.

In all countries, the public is generally aware of potential hazards, risks and past accidents, but is not well informed about where to find information about existing hazards or risks. It is also insufficiently informed about available sources of information. Interestingly, despite the fact that human error is the most frequent cause of accidents, public opinion indicates that hazardous technologies are the primary cause.

During workshops in the three target countries, the survey results were disseminated among environmental and public health authorities, industry representatives and NGOs. Legal instruments on industrial risks, as stated in the Seveso Directive II, or relevant provisions of the Aarhus Convention, were also discussed during the workshops.

What comes next

Workshop participants and respondents to the risks survey expressed the need for better access to information on risks to health and the environment. They also expressed a preference for particular types and methods of disseminating information.
Support Mechanisms and Key Factors
Background

The Balkan Information Service (BIS) was created as an information clearinghouse for RERep because of the overwhelming amount of information expected to appear during the reconstruction process. The BIS intended to gather, structure and disseminate tangible results of project implementation and provide environmental information about South Eastern Europe to environmental stakeholders inside and outside the region. This was assured by offering a "question and answer" service, and by providing access to a library with a wide range of environmental information resources focused on SEE. Aiming to facilitate cooperation and better access to information, the BIS also gathered information about the region into numerous databases, mainly with regard to REReP projects and beneficiaries, environmental experts, events and legislation. They also created a directory of NGO funders, a directory of governmental organisations with environmental responsibilities, and a directory of environmental information sources. The project implementation was made possible thanks to financial support of the USEPA.

Progress so far

The REReP project database currently contains complete information on 53 REReP projects. Over 300 key contacts are listed in the REReP Beneficiaries and Benefactors Directory, which includes governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, media and academia involved with or interested in the REReP process and its implementation. The NGO Funders Directory details more than 100 sources of funding for NGOs working on environmental issues. More than 20 issues of the Green Horizon newsletter were published on-line, reaching up to 450 subscribers on a monthly basis — mostly journalists and environmental professionals. The directories are available on the Internet and are often referred to for information. In addition, more than 3,000 people have visited the Balkan Information Service webpage at: <www.rec.org/REC/Programs/InformationProgram/BalkanInformationService/Default.html>.

The achievements described above are just a few among several achievements of this project indicating that the Balkan Information Service was a useful activity for supporting REReP’s implementation. The databases continue to be updated (e.g. environmental events related to the CEE region are announced via the online database), just as new services are being developed. The final output of the project — the Directory of Environmental Resources and Services in Central and Eastern Europe — is based on the first regional survey of environmental information resources and services in Central and Eastern Europe. The results of this inventory and needs assessment will be published in a new directory for each and every country in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), which will provide information about institutions and their stores of environmental information, and will highlight critical needs.

What comes next

The further operation of this information service is especially important, because REReP results are just now beginning to appear. The time is now ripe to foster exchanges of experience among environmental stakeholders within the region. In addition, the BIS will continue to serve as a portal of environmental informa-
tion about the Balkans, including information about the reconstruction process. These information-clearing-house activities, as well as the maintenance of databases and directories, must be continued. Updates of the following directories will soon be necessary: REReP Beneficiaries and Benefactors Database, REReP Projects Database, Database of Environmental Events, Ecolegis (a collection of environmental laws from the region), Catalogue of REC Information Resources, CEE Government and Environment Directory, and CEE Environmental Experts Directory. Based on a survey of environmental information resources and services, it is apparent that the consolidation of the environmental information specialists’ network in the region and the development of a common on-line catalogue of environmental resources are also required.

The main idea behind the BIS was to distribute the tangible results of REReP implementation. However, this kind of information has begun to appear only at the end of a two-year period of project implementation. Therefore, similar activities in the future should continue after the actual phase of implementation is complete, so that an opportunity remains for the distribution of final project results. The other scope of the project — the publishing of databases and directories — proved to be a valuable support strategy for the REReP process. A similar approach — "one-stop" on-line access to contact information of various environmental stakeholders — will be of certain benefit for the implementation of similar programmes.
Background

As decided at the ministerial meeting in Skopje 2000, which established the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe, the REC was appointed to serve as the secretariat of the programme’s task force.

Responsibilities of the secretariat include facilitating donor communication between all REReP stakeholders — especially through the preparation and organisation of task force meetings — and dissemination of information concerning REReP implementation. Information about the programme is disseminated directly via electronic means by the secretariat and through the Balkan Information Service, as described earlier. Using these tools, the secretariat assists in donor support coordination and in the assessment of REReP priorities.

The task force takes decisions on further implementation of REReP and, if necessary, finds solutions to existing problems. The secretariat implements these decisions between task force meetings, assists countries in the preparation of new projects and fundraising, and also acts as an implementing agency for specific projects. While monitoring the progress of REReP implementation, the secretariat is in continuous contact with task force members, donors and implementing agencies.

This project was implemented with generous support of the European Commission, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands.

Progress so far

While working on projects in these areas, the REReP Task Force, through its secretariat, encourages coherent efforts of the SEE countries, donor countries, agencies and civil society to reconstruct the region — taking into consideration the scarcity of resources and environmental challenges — within the Stability Pact framework and through links with the Stabilisation and Association Process. Special emphasis is given to the integration of environmental considerations into the process of reconstruction, support for regional and national project preparation, the transfer of knowledge from CEE to the SEE region, and support for environmental education and training. The REReP Task Force operates in a spirit of partnership, involving coherent and complementary efforts from each stakeholder, while making the best use of resources.

The REReP Task Force meets twice a year to discuss major developments at the national and regional level, in addition to the overall progress in REReP implementation, which includes NGO activities. In the first two years of REReP implementation the secretariat has organised five regional task force meetings, including one held in Brussels. Such organisation includes coordination of SEE country reports on the progress of REReP projects and activities. The secretariat also monitors project implementation and presents monitoring results at each REReP Task Force meeting. It also drafts background documents and deals with administrative preparations.

The shift in responsibility for reporting the achieved progress from implementing agencies to the countries represented at task force meetings has resulted in a broader acknowledgement of REReP’s results, and has added to the responsibilities of those countries towards the national and international environmental community. For this reason, and because of the identification of programme goals, SEE countries have become the effective owners of REReP priority programmes.

The secretariat provides information about bilateral and multilateral assistance in the region in order to avoid duplicating its efforts, as well as to ensure synergy results from the projects through maintaining the electronic REReP project database and its Internet website. The REReP project database is available at: <www.rec.org/REC/Databases/REReP/Default.html>. (For its search page, see Annex 5.)

The secretariat homepage can be found at: <www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REREP/Default.html>.

In the field of assistance for project preparation and fundraising, secretariat activities focus on the identification of regional and national environmental priorities. For example, the secretariat collected and processed information about specific projects as demanded by individual countries.

What comes next

The political situation in the whole SEE region has changed significantly since the REReP’s conception. SEE countries participate in the SAP with institutionalised
financial support through the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme. Task force members restated the aims of REReP in 2001, focusing on assistance to those countries which must meet obligations within SAP. This process should be continuously complemented with the effective coordination of international assistance in environmental issues, and by building future conditions for sustainable development. Moreover, CEE accession countries can share the experiences accumulated during a decade of transition within the SEE region. In addition, REReP’s links to other regional initiatives related to reconstruction and the environment — such as the Danube and Black Sea (DABLAS) Task Force or Sava Basin Initiative — need to be continually reinforced.

Along with the continuation of assistance to the region in this new political situation, any activities assisting the donor community and other stakeholders to better coordinate financial aid should continue by facilitating exchanges of experience, maintaining links with other regional initiatives, communicating within the REReP mechanism, monitoring REReP projects and reporting on their progress.

The REReP Task Force Secretariat will actively continue to circulate information about the programme, thereby engaging all its partners and stakeholders.

Because of its extensive experience in REReP implementation, the secretariat will also play a role in reviewing the REReP mechanism and discussing its future.
REReP’s added value comes from a unique mechanism based on direct national involvement and ownership, in addition to a coordinated means of providing donor support and a coherent regional process for addressing priority needs.

The involvement of multiple stakeholders (governments, regional and local authorities, NGOs and their networks, media, the general public, businesses, etc.) in REReP implementation has proven successful as a way of building up trust, confidence and environmental security. It has also contributed to programme transparency and higher levels of efficiency.

The regular dissemination of information and updated list of projects significantly improved the consistency, visibility and coordination of international assistance to SEE. Information concerning REReP implementation, as well as other important SEE environmental developments, was continuously disseminated through the Regional Environmental Press Centre, Balkan Information Service (BIS), Regional Environmental Portal and other media.

REReP Task Force meetings include a regular process review together with an active exchange of information among stakeholders, which has provided continuous guidance for REReP implementation. It has also created opportunities to discuss existing problems and bottlenecks at the earliest stages and to address them efficiently.

The priority project proposals identified by countries in 2000 have been complemented by other regional initiatives. The programme’s flexibility and openness has contributed to the maintenance of national interest and initiative, and has made REReP successful in addressing SEE needs. In addition REReP succeeded in providing rapid response to the changing political situation in the region and the evolving country needs.

The combination of lead countries and implementing agencies working together to address SEE regional environmental priorities also appears to be beneficial for REReP implementation. Lead countries have provided political and strategic leadership, and implementing agencies contribute with their know-how on practical arrangements, ensuring a streamlined project process.

The transfer of best practices and lessons learned from EU-candidate countries plays a positive role in the capacity-building process within REReP.

Environmental concern appears to be an excellent incentive for enhancing cross-border cooperation, which is especially important for countries with a recent history of conflict. Joint cross-border activities and initiatives have proven to be effective tools for developing mutual trust and dialogue. They also strengthen institutional capacity and motivate local stakeholders to take action to protect the environment in the interest of future generations.

The REReP project package does more than support preparatory activities for approximation of the acquis communautaire, especially in the fields of civil society building and the acceptance and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. We need only mention the projects on public participation, civil society development, NGO support, regional network-building and strategy development.

For future REReP activities in SEE, it will be important to continue addressing those problems which are identified by the countries themselves. This will help to maintain high levels of achievement in terms of country ownership and the effective use of resources. Another suggestion is that capacity-building activities could be coupled with pilot projects. It is of vital importance to continue the process of prioritising needs and strategy formulas. Issues of raising public awareness and environmental education must also be addressed.

It will be important to further develop cross-border cooperation by increasing the number of joint projects and initiatives. There is demand for keeping the focus on sharing the region’s best practices. The replication of successful pilot projects and their adaptation to SEE needs and conditions is also important.

Efforts should continue to ensure the sustainability of networks, despite constant changes in governmental leadership. It is becoming more and more crucial to work on the further transfer of knowledge, skills and experiences gained by trained SEE staff to their colleagues.

Continuous support to the NGO community through grants, direct assistance and promotion of networking in the region can lead to greater visibility and credibility in the future.
Annexes
Annex I: Article 103 (1) of the Stabilisation and Association Agreements

Article 103: Environment and Nuclear Safety

1. The Parties shall develop and strengthen their cooperation in the vital task of combating environmental degradation, with the view to supporting environmental sustainability.

2. Cooperation could centre on the following priorities:
   - combating local, regional and cross-border pollution (air, water quality, including wastewater treatment and drinking water pollution) and establishing effective monitoring;
   - development of strategies with regard to global and climate issues;
   - efficient, sustainable and clean energy production and consumption, safety of industrial plants;
   - classification and safe handling of chemicals;
   - waste reduction, recycling and safe disposal, and the implementation of the Basle Convention on the control of trans-boundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal (Basel 1989);
   - the environmental impact of agriculture; soil erosion and pollution by agricultural chemicals;
   - the protection of forests, the flora and fauna; the conservation of bio-diversity; town and country planning, including construction and urban planning;
   - environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment;
   - continuous approximation of laws and regulations to Community standards;
   - international Conventions in the area of environment to which the Community is Party;
   - cooperation at regional level as well as cooperation within the framework of the European Environment Agency;
   - education, information and awareness on environmental issues.

Available at: <europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/>. 
### 1. Functioning of the REReP Task Force Secretariat
- All SEE countries

### 2. Development of a regional investment strategy (focus areas: waste, water, biodiversity, air)
- Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo*

### 3. Assistance in approximation of environmental law, including drafting of new environmental laws
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro

### 4. Capacity building of Environmental Impact Assessment
- Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sofia Initiative Secretariat
- Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo*

### 4.1. Capacity building of Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sofia Initiative Secretariat
- All SEE countries

### 5. Networking of environmental and finance specialists in SEE/development and enhancing effectiveness of economic instruments
- FYR Macedonia
- Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo*, Bulgaria, Romania

### 5.2. Pilot technical assistance to institutional and operational development of the environmental fund in Croatia
- Croatia

### 6. Membership and cooperation with European Environmental Agency, joint development of a regional monitoring system, and the harmonisation of information/monitoring system and methodologies (including bio-monitoring) with EU standards
- Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia
- Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project No.</th>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Lead country</th>
<th>Geographical area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Functioning of the REReP Task Force Secretariat</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Development of a regional investment strategy (focus areas: waste, water, biodiversity, air)</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
<td>Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo*</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Assistance in approximation of environmental law, including drafting of new environmental laws</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Capacity building of Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
<td>Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sofia Initiative Secretariat</td>
<td>Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo*</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4.1</td>
<td>Capacity building of Strategic Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sofia Initiative Secretariat</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5.1</td>
<td>Networking of environmental and finance specialists in SEE/development and enhancing effectiveness of economic instruments</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo*, Bulgaria, Romania</td>
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<td>1.5.2</td>
<td>Pilot technical assistance to institutional and operational development of the environmental fund in Croatia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Membership and cooperation with European Environmental Agency, joint development of a regional monitoring system, and the harmonisation of information/monitoring system and methodologies (including bio-monitoring) with EU standards</td>
<td>Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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## Annex II: List of Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementing agency</th>
<th>Budget (EUR unless indicated otherwise)</th>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Notes on project</th>
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<td>REC</td>
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<td>136,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
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<td>REC, SEE partners</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>REC, SEE partners</td>
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<td>EU</td>
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<td>REC, SEE Countries</td>
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<td>GTZ</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>Strengthening the capacity of national environmental protection agencies and their inspectorates</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<td>1.7.1</td>
<td>Strengthening the capacity of national environmental protection agencies and their inspectorates</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td>1.7.2</td>
<td>BERCEN exchange programme</td>
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<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Development of national information systems</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>Strengthening the capacities for approximation of environmental acquis</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>Regional strategy for hazardous waste management</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td>1.11</td>
<td>Capacity building in cleaner production in FYR Macedonia (Phases I and II)</td>
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<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<td>1.12</td>
<td>Support for the ratification and implementation of multilateral environmental conventions, with special emphasis on Aarhus Conventions and those conventions related to biodiversity issues</td>
<td>Albania, Bulgaria, Romania</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<td>1.15</td>
<td>Regional environmental information portal for SEE</td>
<td>Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia</td>
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<td>1.16</td>
<td>Information service for SEE countries</td>
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<td>ALL SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>Support to the Sofia Initiative on Economic Instruments</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>CEE, including all SEE countries</td>
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<td>1.19</td>
<td>Assistance to the national focal points of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia to meet their obligations in relation to EEA</td>
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<td>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia</td>
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<td>1.20</td>
<td>Support to environmental legislation and institutional structuring in Serbia</td>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
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<td>1.21</td>
<td>Capacity building of the Department of Environment</td>
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<td>Kosovo*</td>
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<td>Implementing agency</td>
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<td>REC SEE partners</td>
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<td>REC</td>
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<td>CRO, REC, UNEP-GIRD, Arendal</td>
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<td>UNEP, Nairobi, UNEP-GIRD, Arendal</td>
<td>80,000, 97,000</td>
<td>Austria, Norway</td>
<td>Total project budget is 1.68 M, UNEP has provided start-up funds</td>
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<td>REC</td>
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<td>REC</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Danish Environmental Protection Agency</td>
<td>210,000</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>OSCE</td>
<td>(Switzerland 128,000) 470,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>Assistance in environmental financing in SEE</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biodiversity strategy, action plan and national report to the conference of Parties (Phase II)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biodiversity strategy, action plan and national report to the Conference of Parties (Phase I)</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>Development of Regional Environmental Press Center for SEE</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>Support developing of implementation strategies of the Aarhus Convention in SEE</td>
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<td>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Building capacity for implementation of the Aarhus convention</td>
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<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>Promoting networking of environmental NGOs: establishment of electronic computer networks on national and regional levels</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>Development and strengthening of NGOs</td>
<td>REC</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5.1</td>
<td>Development and strengthening of NGOs (ensuring NGO participation in REReP process through local and cooperative grants)</td>
<td>REC</td>
<td>Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td>2.5.2</td>
<td>Strengthening SEE NGOs</td>
<td>REC</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5.3</td>
<td>Development of public participation practices in SEE countries</td>
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<td>2.5.4</td>
<td>Environmental civil society building</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.5.5</td>
<td>Development and strengthening of NGOs: aluminium collection and recycling as sustainable NGO financing mechanisms</td>
<td>Kosovo*</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing agency</td>
<td>Budget (EUR unless indicated otherwise)</td>
<td>Donor</td>
<td>Notes on project</td>
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<td>380,000</td>
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<td>UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science in Europe</td>
<td>660,000</td>
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<td>FYR Macedonia, Environmental Press Center, REC, SEE partners</td>
<td>226,000</td>
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<td>REC, SEE partners</td>
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<td>REC, SEE partners</td>
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<td>SEEENN</td>
<td>74,000, 80,000</td>
<td>EU, Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Assistance to the development of Environmental Legal Advocacy/Advisory Centers</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Strengthening and development of NGOs (NGO cooperation within and beyond CEE borders)</td>
<td>REC</td>
<td>Western Europe, CEE, SEE and NiS</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Capacity building for better nature conservation</td>
<td>Kosovo*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Publication of the Bulletin for SEE countries</td>
<td>REC</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Support for NGO projects in the run-up to Kiev ministerial conference in 2003</td>
<td>REC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1</td>
<td>Facilitating bilateral cross-border cooperation among SEE countries</td>
<td></td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.23</td>
<td>Promotion of networks and exchange in SEE countries</td>
<td>Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Romania</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.23.1</td>
<td>Balkan Plant Conservation Network</td>
<td>REC</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<td>4.3.23.2</td>
<td>Golden Gates of the Danube: Trans-boundary management of two national parks in the Iron Gates area</td>
<td>REC</td>
<td>Romania, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td>4.3.23.3</td>
<td>Establishment of Balkan Conservation and Development Forum</td>
<td>REC</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3.26</td>
<td>Pilot project on rapid risk assessment in environment and health lower and medium Danube Basin</td>
<td>Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria</td>
<td>Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.27</td>
<td>Cross-border municipal environmental cooperation: Drina River basin</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENVIMED (Medcities I)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEDWET: Conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Mediterranean Basin</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>METAP integrated coastal zone management</td>
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<td>Implementing agency</td>
<td>Budget (EUR unless indicated otherwise)</td>
<td>Donor</td>
<td>Notes on project</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Budget is estimated for three years</td>
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<tr>
<td>REC</td>
<td>100,800</td>
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<td>REC</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>REC, World Health Organization, Italy</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<td>986,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Life Third Countries</td>
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<td>33,000</td>
<td>Life Third Countries, Albania is the only SEE beneficiary</td>
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<td>Project No.</td>
<td>Project title</td>
<td>Lead country</td>
<td>Geographical area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indicators for sustainable development in the Mediterranean region</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated water and ecosystems management project</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wetlands restoration and pollution reduction</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agricultural pollution control (Black Sea-Danube)</td>
<td>Romania</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lake Ohrid management</td>
<td>Albania, FYR Macedonia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Black Sea-Danube strategic partnership for nutrient reduction</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Post-conflict environmental assessment in Albania and FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>Albania, FYR Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Development of project preparation capacity for environmental investment projects</td>
<td>Romania, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>All SEE countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.1.</td>
<td>Elimination of 800 tonnes of arsenic solution stocked near Semani River, directly discharged into the sea</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5.4</td>
<td>Rehabilitation of uncontrolled disposal sites and setting up a waste-management system on the island of Mljet</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>5.5.5</td>
<td>Protection of the Vardar River from chromium pollution by draining the Muzga</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
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<td>5.5.7</td>
<td>Reclamation of Obrovac area: integrated environmental-energy reclamation</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5.8</td>
<td>Italian-Macedonian bilateral cooperation on Vardar River: rehabilitation and joint intervention</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Humanitarian environmental clean-up in FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Environmental remediation at the Gracanica mining and processing plant</td>
<td>Kosovo*</td>
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<td>Humanitarian environmental clean-up in Albania (Sharra solid-waste dump site)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing agency</td>
<td>Budget (EUR unless indicated otherwise)</td>
<td>Donor</td>
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<td>Life Third Countries, Albania</td>
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<td>Life Third Countries, Albania is the only SEE beneficiary</td>
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<td>27,290,000</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italys initial funding amounted to 200,000</td>
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<td>Netherlands (2M)</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project No.</td>
<td>Project title</td>
<td>Lead country</td>
<td>Geographical area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Revitalisation of the area contaminated with mercury in former CI-PVC production zone in Vlore</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Novi Sad refinery remediation complementary research (first phase)</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td>Rehabilitation of the HIP PETROHEMIJA Pancevo site in Serbia and Montenegro, which is polluted by chlorinated hydrocarbons</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improving the general environmental health of the coastal region</td>
<td></td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eco-tourism and sustainable development project for Butrint</td>
<td></td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Technical Assistance to the National Water Council</td>
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<td>Albania</td>
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<td>Technical assistance for the Water Regulatory Agency</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Construction of the Vlora wastewater system</td>
<td></td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing agency</td>
<td>Budget (EUR unless indicated otherwise)</td>
<td>Donor</td>
<td>Notes on project</td>
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<tr>
<td>CETA-VUOS a.s.</td>
<td>906,000</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEOtest Brno</td>
<td>590,000</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEKONTA Kladno, a.s.</td>
<td>134,000</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>950,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a cross-border cooperation programme with Italy, lasting from June 30, 2002 to June 30, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a cross-border cooperation with Greece, lasting from Dec. 31, 2000 to Dec. 31, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a programme to develop infrastructure, lasting from Dec. 31, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a programme to develop infrastructure, lasting from Dec. 31, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,450,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a cross-border cooperation programme with Italy to develop infrastructure, lasting from Dec. 31, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,150,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a programme to develop infrastructure</td>
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<td>1,550,000</td>
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<td>Part of a programme to develop infrastructure</td>
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<td>2,450,000</td>
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<td>Part of a programme to develop infrastructure</td>
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<td>700,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a programme to develop human and natural resources (foreseen to be completed by the end of 1999)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Contains five components</td>
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<td>100,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of local community development programme, lasting from Dec. 31, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2002</td>
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<td>Project No.</td>
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<td>Lead country</td>
<td>Geographical area</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection and disposal of solid waste in Vlore</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solid waste collection and disposal plan for Gjorkastra</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eco-tourism and sustainable development project for Butrint</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disposal of pesticide waste</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operational programme of economic regeneration of the forestry sector</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of a national waste management plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of environmental legislation for Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strengthening the institutional and administrative capacities of the Ministry of Environment</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agriculture and natural resources, environmental programme</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction of two water quality monitoring stations on Vardar River</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lake Dojran management and waste water collection studies</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vardar River water quality review</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
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<td>Environmental Center for Administration and Technology (ECAT)</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisation of the urban waste management in six main Albanian cities</td>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing agency</td>
<td>Budget (EUR unless indicated otherwise)</td>
<td>Donor</td>
<td>Notes on project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>400,000</td>
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<td>Part of a cross-border cooperation programme with Italy, foreseen to be completed by end of 1999</td>
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<td>200,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a cross-border cooperation Programme with Greece, foreseen to be completed by the end of 1999</td>
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<td>750,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a regional project involving cross-border cooperation with Greece, lasting from June 2002 to June 2003</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>From Jan 1, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2002</td>
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<td>8,000,000</td>
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<td>Completed at the end of 2001</td>
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<td>750,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Completed in September 2000</td>
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<td>Part of the EC Environmental Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina, lasting from Oct. 2000 to Oct. 2001</td>
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<td>3,000,000</td>
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<td>Part of SOP for 1999</td>
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<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Contains four components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a cross-border cooperation programme with Greece, foreseen to be completed by Dec. 31, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Part of a cross-border cooperation programme with Greece, foreseen to be completed by end of 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Cross-border cooperation programme with Greece, foreseen to be completed by end of 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,838,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Life Third Countries contribution is 800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>591,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Life Third Countries contribution is 535,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project No.</td>
<td>Project title</td>
<td>Lead country</td>
<td>Geographical area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional strengthening of MAP Office for Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainable rehabilitation of urban environmental systems</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of new management policy for Hutovo Blato wetlands</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indicators for sustainable development in the Mediterranean region</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karavasta wetlands</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pomorisko Lake conservation, restoration and management</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karst ecosystems conservation</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Energy efficiency</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kopacki Rit wetlands management</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Renewable energy resources</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mini-hydro power project</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biodiversity conservation management</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Energy efficiency</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementing agency</th>
<th>Budget (EUR unless indicated otherwise)</th>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Notes on project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>188,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Life Third Countries contribution is 162,000, lasting from July 1, 1998 to July 1, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Life Third Countries contribution is 369,000, lasting from July 1, 1998 to July 1, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>340,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Life Third Countries contribution is 170,000, lasting from July 1, 1999 to July 1, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>774,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Life Third Countries contribution is 766,000, lasting from Jan. 1, 1997 to Jan. 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27,290,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88,400,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30,400,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,850,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27,400,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,290,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,800,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50,000,000</td>
<td>GEF/AWB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex III: **Summarised information on donor contributions and status of REReP priority projects**

**Priority Projects**

### Status of implementation of REReP priority projects* by area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority areas</th>
<th>Completed or underway</th>
<th>No funding secured</th>
<th>Total No. of REReP priority projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The numbering of individual projects in the table follows the original classification of REReP priority projects of 2000 into five priority areas. These areas have been revised by the REReP Task Force in 2001. At present REReP priority projects fall under four priority areas. However, their officially assigned numbers have not been changed. REReP projects without officially assigned numbers that are shown in the annex are not REReP priority projects, as defined by the SEE countries at the time of its formulation.

### Status of implementation of REReP priority projects by area

- Institution building
- Support to environmental civil society
- Support to environmental regional cooperation mechanisms and cross-border projects
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity
### Funds committed by main individual donor countries into REReP priority projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Underway</th>
<th>EUR total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>71,000</td>
<td>5,380,000</td>
<td>5,451,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
<td>920,000</td>
<td>2,470,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>2,116,800</td>
<td>2,167,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1,366,000</td>
<td>4,398,000</td>
<td>5,764,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>490,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>490,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>708,750</td>
<td></td>
<td>708,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,605,000</td>
<td>1,605,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td></td>
<td>298,000</td>
<td>298,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUR total</td>
<td>4,236,750</td>
<td>15,467,800</td>
<td>19,704,550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Donor contributions to REReP priority projects by percentage

- EC: 28%
- Denmark: 13%
- Germany: 11%
- Netherlands: 28%
- Italy: 2%
- Norway: 4%
- Switzerland: 8%
- USA: 4%
- Czech Republic: 2%
Funding status of REReP priority projects (in EUR)

- **Complete**: 4,236,750 EUR
- **Underway**: 15,467,800 EUR
- **TOTAL (EUR)**: 19,704,550 EUR

**Total Donor Contributions**: 15,000,000 EUR

**Underway** projects account for 10,000,000 EUR, while **Complete** projects represent 5,000,000 EUR.
Project data on a country-by-country basis

### Number of projects per country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Breakdown of projects in Albania by priority area

- **Institution building** - 48%
- **Supporting environmental civil society** - 32%
- **Supporting environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects** - 15%
- **Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity** - 5%

#### Number of projects in Albania by priority area:
- Institution building = 20
- Support to environmental civil society = 13
- Support to environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects = 6
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity = 2
Breakdown of projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina by priority area

- Institution building - 45%
- Supporting environmental civil society - 29%
- Supporting environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects - 24%
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity - 2%

Number of projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina by priority area:
- Institution building = 20
- Support to environmental civil society = 13

Number of projects in Bulgaria by priority area:
- Institution building = 13
- Support to environmental civil society = 9

- Support to environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects = 11
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity = 1
Breakdown of projects in Croatia by priority area

- Institution building - 45%
- Supporting environmental civil society - 28%
- Supporting environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects - 23%
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity - 4%

Number of projects in Croatia by priority area:
- Institution building = 21
- Support to environmental civil society = 13
- Support to environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects = 11
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity = 2

Breakdown of projects in FYR Macedonia by priority area

- Institution building - 48%
- Supporting environmental civil society - 30%
- Supporting environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects - 11%
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity - 11%

Number of projects in FYR Macedonia by priority area:
- Institution building = 21
- Support to environmental civil society = 13
- Support to environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects = 5
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity = 5
**Breakdown of projects in Romania by priority area**

- Institution building - 44%
- Supporting environmental civil society - 34%
- Supporting environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects - 19%
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity - 3%

**Number of projects in Romania by priority area:**
- Institution building = 14
- Support to environmental civil society = 11
- Support to environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects = 6
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity = 1

**Breakdown of projects in Serbia and Montenegro by priority area**

- Institution building - 42%
- Supporting environmental civil society - 28%
- Supporting environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects - 21%
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity - 9%

**Number of projects in Serbia and Montenegro by priority area:**
- Institution building = 20
- Support to environmental civil society = 13
- Support to environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects = 10
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity = 4
Breakdown of projects in Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration) by priority

- Institution building - 46%
- Supporting environmental civil society - 29%
- Supporting environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects - 20%
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity - 5%

Number of projects in Kosovo (territory under UN interim administration) by priority area:

- Institution building = 19
- Support to environmental civil society = 12
- Support to environmental regional cooperation and cross-border projects = 8
- Reducing environmental health threats and loss of biodiversity = 2
Annex IV: Information on donor contributions and status of REReP priority projects

Priority Project 1.5.2: Pilot technical assistance for institutional and operational development of the environmental fund in Croatia

**Implementation period:** September 2001—June 2003
**Beneficiary country:** Croatia
**Leading country:** Croatia

**Objective:**
to set up an environmental fund as an instrument for financing environmental activities.

**Results:**
- self-management;
- an environmental fund;
- improvement of environmental legislation;
- financial support for environmental activities.

**Output:**
draft version of the Bill on the Environmental and Energy Efficiency Fund

**Donor financing:**
EUR 200,000 from the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

**Implementing agency:**
German Agency for Technical Cooperation

Priority Project 1.11: Capacity building for cleaner production in FYR Macedonia (Phases I and II)

**Implementation period:**
**Beneficiary country:** FYR Macedonia
**Leading country:** Czech Republic

**Objectives:**
- implementing projects to demonstrate cleaner products;
- providing support to the Macedonian Cleaner Production Centre;
- training experts in pollution prevention methods;
- organising seminars for government, academia, local consultants and company employees.

**Results:**
- reduced impact of industry on Macedonian environment;
- economic benefits (by reducing production costs) for participating companies.

**Output:**
- 5 demonstration projects on cleaner production;
- 40 experts trained in pollution-prevention methods;
- 300 seminar participants;
- draft of National Cleaner Production Programme in FYR Macedonia.

**Donor financing:**
EUR 248,000 (Phase I) and EUR 50,000 (Phase II) from the Czech Republic
Implementing agency:
Cleaner Production Center, Czech Republic

Priority Project 1.15: Regional environmental information portal for South Eastern Europe

Implementation period:
January 2001—December 2003-05-08
Beneficiary countries: All SEE
Leading countries: Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia

Objectives:
• increasing access to environmental information by decision-makers and the public;
• facilitating implementation of the "information pillar" of the Aarhus Convention;
• facilitating inter-country exchanges of environmental information;
• strengthening sub-regional networking among primary producers of environmental information;
• establishing an integrated information service on environmental matters in each SEE country in response to decision 20/5 (see Annex II) of the Governing Council of UNEP;
• implementing the UNEP-Infoterra consortium structure to deliver nationally integrated service;
• developing the SEE component UNEP.Net from a thematic and geographic perspective;
• promoting closer cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sectors in delivering environmental information to the user community.

Results:
• creation of an environmental information portal for SEE, comprised of both geographic and thematic components and covering priority focal areas identified by SEE countries;
• development of a comprehensive SEE directory of environmental institutions and related resource and information data;
• re-vitalisation of UNEP-Infoterra SEE sub-network with active National Focal Points and network consortium members in each SEE country.

Output:
• FAO/UNEP-Workshop on Environmental Legislation Database FAOLEX and UNEP Environment Directory;
• workshop on environmental status reports on the Internet: methods, processes, tools;
• production of an electronic state-of-the-environment report in Croatia, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro;
• training workshop for production of an Internet-based daily electronic environmental news service;
• launch of the EarthWire Srbija news service;
• development of a project news-service module for UNEP-Net.

Donor financing:
• USD 97,000 from the Norwegian Ministry for the Environment
• USD 80,000 Austrian UNEP contribution

Implementing agency:
United Nations Environment Programme

Priority Project 4.3.26: Balkan Conservation and Development Forum

Implementation period:
November 2002—March 2004
Beneficiary countries: all SEE countries
Leading country: none

Objectives:
• providing a European framework for informal discussions on biodiversity integration into rural development (agriculture and tourism);
• summarising and demonstrating experience and practices of integrating biodiversity into rural development;
• identifying rural development programmes and best practices.

Results:
• two regional workshops held;
• platform for cooperation established;
• regional experience identified and shared.

Output:
• October 2003 workshop on biodiversity and tourism in SEE;
• February 2004 workshop on biodiversity and agriculture in SEE.

Donor financing:
EUR 107,970 from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Implementing agency:
The REC

Priority Project 4.3.27: Cross-border municipal cooperation — Drina River Basin

Implementation period:
January 2003—March 2004

Beneficiary countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro

Leading country: Serbia and Montenegro

Objectives:
• facilitating peaceful, constructive and sustainable cooperation between citizens and officials from Serbia and Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina;
• designing a mutually-acceptable solution to prevent waste accumulation in Lake Perucac and the Drina River.

Results:
• Local stakeholders have come together to design a sustainable plan for the removal of solid waste from the lake and river. This also serves as a model of technical assistance that can be applied in other communities.

Output:
• creation of a set of conceptual options for technical means of collecting and disposing of existing waste, and to prevent further waste accumulation in the lake;
• signing an agreement between municipalities on a long-term solution;
• conducting a detailed feasibility study for technical solution and financing options.

Donor financing:
• EUR 58,770 from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Implementing agency:
The REC
Annex V: REReP Projects Database
THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (REC) is a non-partisan, non-advocacy, not-for-profit organisation with a mission to assist in solving environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The Center fulfils this mission by encouraging cooperation among non-governmental organisations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, by supporting the free exchange of information and by promoting public participation in environmental decision-making.

The REC was established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. Today, the REC is legally based on a Charter signed by the governments of 27 countries and the European Commission, and on an International Agreement with the Government of Hungary. The REC has its headquarters in Szentendre, Hungary, and local offices in each of its 15 beneficiary CEE countries, which are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Recent donors are the European Commission and the governments of Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as other inter-governmental and private institutions.