Regional Sector Grants

The regional grants were distributed in two rounds that supported five projects each. A total of 37 CSOs were involved in the first round and 13 in the second. The major themes of the projects included waste management, energy conservation, urban greening (including land use and planning), and urban transport.

The awarded project raised awareness through campaigns and lobbying activities, promoted behaviour change such as switching to sustainable transport, offered environmental education, established community-level "green hotlines," and enhanced urban-green spaces. One project sought to advance environmental concerns through the creation of a regional parliamentary lobbying group.

The grants promoted regional cross-border cooperation in which partner CSOs shared their knowledge, skills, and experiences. Projects took the approach of learning by doing. For example, schools implemented energy conservation projects with hands-on help from students. Other initiatives enhanced CSOs' skills in cooperation, public relations, and lobbying while giving them experience installing solar water heating collectors, hybrid solar/wind energy generators and composters.

Lessons from the project came not only from successes but also from difficulties. For instance, although most projects envisioned wide stakeholder participation at the proposal stage, they involved a far more limited group during actual implementation. Wide community engagement would have improved ownership of the project results.

The REC's project management training encouraged media outreach. However, in all of the projects, participants noted that payments were expected in exchange for media coverage. CSOs also reported difficulties getting local authorities involved. In most cases, the CSOs had to facilitate the authorities' role themselves. Results also included increased project ownership by the wider community, which could reflect the CSOs' public image.

Regional Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>EUR awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growing urban local consumption</td>
<td>Croatia, Serbia</td>
<td>32,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-schools network</td>
<td>FYR Macedonia, Serbia</td>
<td>34,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkan Knowledge network – Sustainability in practice</td>
<td>BIH, Croatia, Albania</td>
<td>39,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional environmental education towards urban sustainable development strategy</td>
<td>Serbia, FYR Macedonia, BIH, Albania, Kosovo</td>
<td>49,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreading the green phone service</td>
<td>BH, Croatia, Serbia</td>
<td>35,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable improvement of air quality related to urban transport in Belgrade</td>
<td>Albania, Montenegro</td>
<td>34,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of urban forests and green areas</td>
<td>BH, Serbia</td>
<td>34,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing and facilitating the regional green lobby</td>
<td>Albania, FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>34,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campains to improve urban transport in Zagreb and Belgrade</td>
<td>Croatia, Serbia</td>
<td>35,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of organic agriculture as alternative for protection of the Ohrid and Prespa lakes</td>
<td>Albania, FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>34,775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL 359,561**
Cities and Civil Society Get a Boost in the Balkans

Low-Carbon Classrooms

The project modelled the problems of inefficient use of energy and private space management by primary schools in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. The problems are partly rooted in a general lack of awareness of renewable energy and of effective energy management. The pilot project schools in Skopje and Kraljevo are testing new sustainable development strategies for schools. A training was offered to teachers on how to lead an eco-school and instruct students about energy conservation techniques.

The project provides a platform for exchanging best practices and developing political support for sustainable energy policies at national level. School buildings are a good location for energy-efficiency projects because they are predominantly centred in urban areas. This is where the main energy consumption takes place. The project targets teachers of primary and secondary schools in Serbia and Macedonia.

Hitting the Brakes on Motorisation

Cities in South Eastern Europe suffer from serious control over noise, and due to the protection of our natural resources one more important alternative. As a result, cities demand more up-to-date management tools and technologies that will help them to obtain the effects of ecological development. One of the main objectives of the project is to examine the potential for energy efficiency and sustainable development in transport, including low-carbon technologies for transport in the Balkans. The project aims to promote more sustainable transport policies through cross-border cooperation among CSOs. The main theses of the project are that it is possible to develop sustainable mobility solutions, and that solutions can be developed in a participatory manner. The project is an activity of the European Union’s Cross-Border Cooperation Programme in the Western Balkans.

The project offers an opportunity for EU-funded projects that work on sustainable urban mobility issues in cooperation with their national counterparts to exchange results and practical experiences. The project aims to facilitate the establishment of other “green” caucuses in national parliaments. A longer-term goal is to promote EU support for national green caucuses and to increase public awareness of the benefits of highly efficient urban transport and mobility systems.

South Eastern Europe suffers from serious noise problems. In urban areas, noise intrusion is the result of various development pressures. The most problematic sources include traffic noise generated by urban transport systems. In order to promote more sustainable transport policies, the project will examine the potential for energy efficiency and sustainable development in transport, including low-carbon technologies for transport in the Balkans. The project aims to promote more sustainable transport policies through cross-border cooperation among CSOs. The main theses of the project are that it is possible to develop sustainable mobility solutions, and that solutions can be developed in a participatory manner. The project is an activity of the European Union’s Cross-Border Cooperation Programme in the Western Balkans.

Making Partners in Parliament

Successful promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection programmes will depend on the building of strong and long-term partnerships with key stakeholders in the political sector. The project will facilitate the establishment of “green” caucuses at the national level in the Balkan countries.

The regional initiative in these countries aimed to establish partnership coalitions among national political parties, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to improve participation in addressing regional environmental issues within the context of sustainable development. The project’s main goal was to establish coalitions and build the capacity of the Regional Green Lobby Group, an existing group of Macedonian NGOs, and to possibly expand membership to neighbouring countries in the Balkans in the form of work-sharing, capacity building and peer-to-peer learning. A series of workshops was held in Macedonia, Albania and Croatia, including the former Yugoslavia countries. The network is now taking on the role of facilitating the establishment of other “green” caucuses in national parliaments. A longer-term goal is to promote EU support for national green caucuses and to increase public awareness of the benefits of highly efficient urban transport and mobility systems.

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Project organisers sought to empower environmental CSOs by developing their skills in lobbying, advocacy, support for public participation and communication with local authorities, citizens, opinion leaders and media. The project’s main goal was to establish coalitions and build the capacity of the Regional Green Lobby Group, an existing group of Macedonian NGOs, and to possibly expand membership to neighbouring countries in the Balkans in the form of work-sharing, capacity building and peer-to-peer learning. A series of workshops was held in Macedonia, Albania and Croatia, including the former Yugoslavia countries. The network is now taking on the role of facilitating the establishment of other “green” caucuses in national parliaments. A longer-term goal is to promote EU support for national green caucuses and to increase public awareness of the benefits of highly efficient urban transport and mobility systems.

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The REC is the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is an organisation with a mission to assist in solving environmental problems. Among other activities, the REC supports civil society organisations (CSOs) to be more effective in their crucial role in the democratic process. This REC supports CSOs through grants programmes, building capacities and organisational viability, and strengthening networking. During its 19 years, the REC has distributed more than EUR 12 million in 5,500 grants to environmental CSOs. In South Eastern Europe, regional and national grants schemes — including those carried out under the SECTOR project — have been used successfully to support scores of CSOs during the last five years.

The SECTOR Project
April 2006 marked the launch of the framework programme SECTOR (Supporting Environmental Civil Society Organisations in South Eastern Europe), which helps programme group partners to play a more important direct role in sustainable development in the field of environmental protection. In promoting civil society, SECTOR aims to push society toward more sustainable development and improved living conditions in cities. Its beneficiary area covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244). Running from April 2006 to April 2010, it has an overall budget of EUR 3.7 million, benefiting Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo. Its beneficiary area covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244). The SECTOR project, close attention was paid to ensuring that beneficiaries had a good ethnic balance and that vulnerable groups of society got support. The projects involved cooperation between CSOs for the sake of knowledge transfer, including between different incentive schemes in the case of regional grants. Throughout the project, close attention was paid to ensuring that beneficiaries had a good ethnic balance and that vulnerable groups of society got support.

SECTOR Grants
This granting scheme supported projects initiated by CSOs at the national and regional levels, contributing to sustainable urban development. There were five grants schemes — together supported 312 national and regional projects with some EUR 1.3 million. Among other goals, the SECTOR grants were meant to enable the CSOs to help the community with issues, facilitate cooperation and coordination between communities and local authorities; raise awareness of the impact of development on the urban environment; promote a more sustainable approach to growth; address policy issues; and organise, and get better results from, their activities; become more sustainable; and that vulnerable groups of society got support.

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Regional Sector Grants
The regional grants were distributed in two rounds that supported five projects each. A total of 17 CSOs were involved in the first round and 13 in the second. The major themes of the projects included waste management, energy conservation, urban greening (including land-use and planning), and urban transport.

The awarded project raised awareness through campaigns and lobbying activities, provided behaviour change such as switching to sustainable transport, offered environmental education, established community level ‘green hotlines’, and enhanced urban-green spaces. One project sought to advance environmental concerns through the creation of a regional parliamentary lobbying group. The grants promoted regional cross-border cooperation in which partner CSOs shared their know-how, skills and experiences. Projects took the approach of learning by doing. For example, schools implemented energy conservation projects with hands-on help from students. Other initiatives enhanced CSO skills in cooperation, public outreach and lobbying while giving them experience installing solar water heating collectors, hybrid solar energy generation and computers. Lessons from the project came not only from successes but also from difficulties. For instance, although most projects envisioned wide stakeholder participation at the proposal stage, they involved a far more limited group during actual implementation. Wide community engagement would have improved ownership of the project results. The REC’s project management training encouraged media outreach. However, all of the projects, participants noted that payments were expected in exchange for media coverage. CSOs also reported difficulties getting local authorities involved. In most cases, the CSOs had to fill the authorities’ role themselves. Results also indicated limited project ownership by the wider community, which could reflect the CSOs’ public image.