



# UNDP BULGARIA AND ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

With the increasing focus on the environment

over the last decade UNDP has increasingly followed an approach that bridges the “gap” between the environment preservation needs and the local development demands. This approach is clearly outlined in the UNDP Bulgaria Country Cooperation Framework 2006-2009, which states that *“it will support sustainable management of natural resources, environmental protection and sustainable energy initiatives through interventions aimed at helping Bulgaria to meet its international commitments, thus generating global, national and local environment benefits. The UNDP programmes will demonstrate environmentally sustainable field models, promote policy shifts for better compliance with EU environmental standards and strengthen national institutional capacity to integrate the objectives of the three Rio conventions into the development planning process at all levels.*

Overall the UNDP agenda centers on achieving the main 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for MDG # 7 namely ensuring environmental sustainability through integrating sustainable development principles into national policies and programmes; reversing environmental resources loss; and reducing the proportion of people without access to drinking water and proper sewerage infrastructure. Since late 2002 Bulgaria has had a comprehensive environmental programme, where GEF projects have played an important role in supporting the regular UNDP projects, broadening the scope of the overall portfolio.

## EARLY BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE UNDP BULGARIA ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

The UNDP/GEF project **National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management (NCSA)** helped prepare the National Capacity Needs Assessment Report for Bulgaria with reference to the country’s commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention on Biodiversity and the UN Convention to Fight Desertification. This project was an important first step in the preparation for the Rio Conventions Project now under implementation.

EcoEnergy is the name of the Municipal Energy Efficiently Network that grew out of the UNDP/GEF

project **Energy Efficiency Strategy to Mitigate Green House Gas Emissions - Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zone in Gabrovo**. The network unites over 100 Bulgarian municipalities. The project

resulted in the development of 37 Municipal Energy Efficiency Programmes even before the enactment of the new Energy Efficiency Law making those programmes mandatory for all local authorities. Based on the EcoEnergy experience the RENEUER network of South Eastern Europe was set up targeting the efficient use of energy and water resources. EcoEnergy was also instrumental for the launch of the Municipal Energy Efficiency Network Project covering the majority of CEE and CIS countries. EcoEnergy advocates for public-private partnerships for increased energy efficiency in the municipal sector. This project provided a solid foundation on which the ongoing UNDP/GEF project Energy Efficiency in Public Private Buildings is now working

The UNDP **Sustainable Development of Rural Areas (SRD)** project enabled stakeholders in 11 Bulgarian rural municipalities to apply the EU Leader methodology for Rural Development in innovative new schemes to generate alternative employment and build up social capital in rural municipalities. Keys result included the forming of Local Leader Groups which played the lead role in the development of environmentally sensitive municipality strategies for local development as well as in the management and implementation of on the ground pilot projects complying with these strategies.

The UNDP/GEF **Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management** in Bulgaria project supported the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Bulgaria. The project enhanced the capacity of central and local stakeholders enabling them to arrest land degradation and establish sustainable land management practice so as to contribute to enhancing ecosystem health, integrity,

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functions and services while promoting sustainable livelihoods in Bulgaria. The project focused on mainstreaming, institutional and technical capacity building and facilitated stakeholders access to financial mechanisms hereby mobilizing resources for sustainable land management. While the project is national in scope it has assisted 10 municipalities in integrating sustainable land management options into their Municipality Development Plans

#### **Clearing House Mechanism**

The project supported the development of a National Biodiversity Conservation Plan and provided assistance to the Ministry of Environment and Water for the creation of an electronic on-line Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism.  
<http://chm.moew.government.bg>

### **CURRENT PROJECTS**

#### **Preserving the Wealth of the Rhodope Mountains**

In 2004 the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and UNDP launched the *Conservation of Globally Significant Biodiversity in the Landscape of the Bulgarian Rhodope Mountains Project*. In parallel to its direct funding of USD 3,454,460 from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the project is supported by accompanying activities amounting to approximately USD 15 million. Activities continue till end of 2009. The goal of the project is to protect globally significant biodiversity and to promote its sustainable use in the Rhodope Region. The project aims to conserve the unique natural and anthropogenic mosaic of habitats, species and land uses that form the Eastern and Western Rhodope landscapes. Activities are focused in areas with sensitive ecosystems and landscape components, such as priority conservation areas, buffer zones and corridors, as well as more general forest, pasture and agricultural lands. The project has a very strong local focus and is working with 27 Rhodopean municipalities and assists these municipalities in integrating nature conservation concerns into their planning documents including their Environment Protection Plans

#### **The RIO Conventions project**

The UNDP/GEF project *Integrating Global Environmental Issues into Bulgaria's Regional Development Process* was prepared as a follow up to the UNDP/GEF NCSA project. The long-term goal of the project is to embed global environmental concerns into the processes of regional and local development, as well as spatial planning in Bulgaria. The project supports the integration of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) into regional development and spatial planning processes in Bulgaria. The project will develop a comprehensive training programme and conduct training for 130 central, regional and government officials enabling them to ensure that the Bulgaria planning processes and the

implementation of these, including the Operational Programmes, meets with national and EU legislation

#### **PONOR Grasslands project**

The UNDP/GEF *Conservation of Globally Important Biodiversity in the Grasslands of the Ponor Mountains Through Support For the Traditional Local Economy* project's goal is to ensure long-term conservation of the high nature value grasslands in Bulgaria by developing biodiversity management plans, as a basis for pilot agri-environmental scheme, which encourage farmers to adopt more biodiversity friendly land management practices in the selected High Nature Value Grasslands (HNVG). The project will mainstream grasslands biodiversity concerns into Bulgaria's agricultural policy and reverse negative changes caused by unsustainable grazing, abandonment, and land conversion in HNVG. The project will also pilot new compensation schemes for farmers as incentives aimed at increasing the farmer's willingness to undertake additional measures towards safeguarding grassland biodiversity.

#### **Energy Efficiency in Private Buildings**

The UNDP/GEF *Building the Local Capacity for Promoting Energy Efficiency in Private and Public Buildings* project builds on the solid foundation laid down by the UNDP/GEF project *Energy Efficiency Strategy to Mitigate Green House Gas Emissions - Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zone in Gabrovo*. The current project will strengthen the institutional framework, raising awareness and building the capacity of the targeted end user groups on the need for energy efficiency in order to create sustainable demand for energy efficiency investments and related services. The project will also build the capacity of the local energy service providers to market their services and to meet the requirements of the targeted financiers to finance energy efficiency (EE) projects. Furthermore the project will facilitate the effective replication and dissemination of the results by i) institutionalizing the further support needed for the promotion of EE measures in public and private buildings, ii) by addressing the remaining legal and regulatory barriers and by iii) facilitating effective dissemination of the project results and lessons learnt. This project has a strong municipalities focus as it assist municipalities with improving their Energy Efficiency Plans hereby addressing the national climate change related policies

The UNDP *Demonstration Project for the Renovation of Multifamily Buildings* project' three objectives is to support the development of a housing policy implementation mechanisms and contribute to the development of municipal capacity for the formulation and implementation of housing projects within the frame of urban development programmes, as well as support residents of multifamily buildings to establish voluntary associations for the renovation of their building and the maintenance of common property. Within this frame the project will however also support the national climate change policy by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through achieving increased energy efficiency in the renovated buildings.

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