



Learning how to mix business with the environment

Project support for capacity building for environmental management

After a decade of economic stagnation imposed upon it during the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina has turned a corner. Yet business development and economic growth without due consideration for environmental issues will only satisfy immediate goals at the expense of long-term ones.

In order to build capacity a project, backed by €1.7 million of EU funds under the CARDS programme, plans to set Bosnia and Herzegovina's environmental management straight. Launched in September 2003, the two-year project's mission is to develop models of 'good practice' for environmental management and to draft and submit relevant secondary legislation to the authorities.

This means providing capacity building and broad-competency training to the Ministry of Physical Planning and the Environment (PPE), to improve co-ordination between the relevant agencies and committees, to help define environmental policy, and bring the country closer into line with EU regulations in this important area. Raising public awareness of the wider environmental and ecological impacts of development is a critical part of the initiative.

Early stages

At the end of 2003 the project was still very much in its inception phase. The project is aimed mostly at the ministerial and agency level – particularly the PPE in Bosnia Herzegovina and the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology in Republica Srpska, the Ministry of Trade and Economic Relations, and the Environmental Steering Committee.

CARDS

Country

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Implementation period

2003-2005

Funding

€1.7 million

Results

Enhance awareness of environmental problems, identify polluting companies, organise training and human resources for better environmental management, draft laws and inform policy in this area

Correspondents

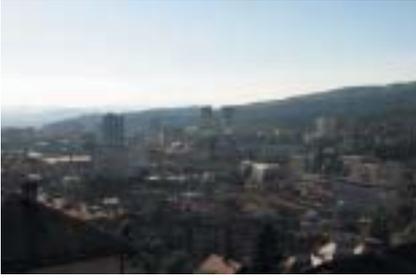
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By analysing and improving the public information campaigns of these organisations, the project hopes to establish a more proactive approach to generating public awareness of what can be done to help the environment. In parallel, there will be an effort to build competence of environmental NGOs and civil society, and increase their efforts. The project plans to redress this situation and – where beneficial – to collaborate with other projects working towards this goal.

Doing the groundwork

Stephen Pattle, the project team leader, outlines how they will proceed in 2004 and 2005 once the set-up phase is complete and the environmental tasks and priorities have been defined. Broadly speaking, it will be broken down into several main activities:

- Define the possible solutions to the environmental problems facing Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Determine the costs and benefits of economic instruments versus command and control procedures (CBA assessments, policy recommendations and training tools);
- Draft one or more secondary laws consistent with the EU's acquis, and guide the country's legislators on environmental legal matters;
- Guide institution building and harmonisation between the country's authorities on this matter, and assess the necessary resources and costs involved;
- Gauge current awareness of the issues and assist ministries in improving their communications activities;
- Set up an observatory providing technical, legal, and policy-making assistance, using accepted tools, such as Environment Impact Assessments and Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control, and market-based economic instruments.

Smooth sailing so far

No major difficulties have sprung up in the project as yet. But the project faces a tough challenge in getting numerous interested parties to work together for the environment of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Key to this process is establishing the project's structure, function and overall responsibilities with cross-sectoral facilitation with ministries, crafting specific technical guidance and public awareness campaigns.