

Dr Pierre Galland

Consultant en Environnement et Développement

Chésaulx 6

CH-2035 Corcelles

Switzerland

Tel: +41 32 725 54 57

Mob: +41 79 758 70 65

E-mail: pierre.galland@bluewin.ch

THE NATURE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME IN MACEDONIA

CONSULTANCY ON REGIONAL CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN THE SCOPE OF PHASE 2

MISSION REPORT

February 2016 - P. Galland (Switzerland)



Background

The Nature Conservation Programme (NCP) in Macedonia started in 2012 with a first 4 years phase which will be finished by the end of 2016; it pursues the following goal:

“The main stakeholders on national, regional and local level effectively conserve the natural resources of the Bregalnica Region, integrating up to date conservation approaches with the principles of sustainable natural resources management and the local economic development agenda”. In the frame of this goal, four outcomes have been defined:

1. Framework conditions for nature conservation are improved;
2. National, regional and local authorities have agreed on sustainable and effective measures for nature conservation for the upper part of the Bregalnica Region;
3. Citizens and local authorities in the Bregalnica Region have gained experience in managing biodiversity, while generating economic benefit from the sustainable use of their natural resources;
4. The Centre for Development of the East Planning Region increasingly becomes a leader in the development and promotion of nature conservation in the Bregalnica Region.

The contract for the execution of the programme was attributed to Hevetas Swiss Intercooperation, with Pharmahem as main executing partner in Macedonia. .

A second 4 years phase was already planned when the credit proposal was accepted; approaching the end of the first phase, SDC, Farmahem and Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation together have realized an internal exercise with the aim to analyse the current situation of the NCP and the lessons learnt, and to propose a general direction to be taken in the second phase, resulting in a “positioning paper”. The implementing partners expressed their wish to have an external view on the achievements of the phase in order to confirm, respectively to modify the objectives and actions foreseen for the 2nd phase. SDC agreed with this request and designated a Swiss expert to make an evaluation and to prepare recommendations in view of the 2nd phase. The present report is the result of the evaluation mission which took place in Skopje and in the Bregalnica region February 15th - 19th, 2016.

Programme of the mission

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| 14 February | Travel Corcelles - Zurich - Skopje. |
| 15 February | Briefing at the Swiss Embassy and with the PCT at Pharmahem office; meetings with the EU commission and MES |
| 16 February | Meetings with the ministries MOEPP and MAFW, and with the PE Macedonian Forests |
| 17 - 18 February | Trip to the Bregalnica region; meeting with mayors, Macedonian Forest local branches, NGOs and the Local project office. Visit of small projects and return to Skopje |
| 19 February | Wrap-up meeting with Pharmahem and Helvetas; meeting with MES, final debriefing in Swiss Embassy and travel back to Switzerland |

The detailed programme with the names of participants to the different meeting is attached to the report.

The consultant would like to thank the Pharmahem Project team (Marjana Suslevska, Cvetan Nikolovski and Katerina Atanasovska), the SDC adviser and project officer at the Embassy (Frank Wiederkehr and Stanislava Dodeva) as well as the Helvetas project officer (Zora Urech) for their comprehensive preparatory work and the very constructive discussions before, during and after the mission. Thanks to the excellent preparation and the comprehensive documentation submitted, it was possible to have a good overview of the programme and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the project, its main components and partners.

Main documents provided by the project before and during the mission:

- Fact Finding mission (Schuerholz, 2010); most of the fact and finding seems to remain valid today
- Project Document Phase 1 (2012?)
- Credit proposal (SDC - 2012) incl. Log Frame
- Yearly Progress Report January - December 2015 (Helvetas - Pharmahem, 2016)
- List of Documents produced in the frame of NCP and their status (Pharmahem, 2016)
- Positioning paper (Helvetas - Pharmahem, 2016?)
- Ecological Gap Analysis and Ecological Sensitivity Map Development for the Bregalnica River Watershed (Dekons-Ema and MES, 2015). Final report, 5 books.

Recommendations regarding the documents:

- some documents do not have a date; it would be useful to systematically include the date and the author(s) in all documents.
- the list of documents should be permanently updated and an updated version (with update date) should be annexed to all the periodic reports; similarly systematic addition of a list of acronyms is highly appreciated, especially by external readers

In addition several projects documents for ongoing or planned projects relevant for the NCP were provided by different organisations:

- Strengthening the capacities for implementation of Natura 2000; ToR of the 2015-16 project (Delegation of the EU, 2014)
- National Programme for Monitoring and Recovery of the Balkan Lynx (Govt of Macedonia, MOEPP, 2016?)
- Protected areas as a vehicle for long-term sustainable development and well-being of communities in Macedonia (IUCN and MOEPP, 2016?)

Main results from the first phase of the programme and considerations regarding its implementation

The Programme acknowledges the fact that biodiversity and nature conservation are aims which can only be achieved effectively by working in a holistic and integrated approach. Planning and developing interventions must avoid sectoral views and approaches. Instead, an integrated view shall prevail through which the Programme will facilitate and build bridges between different sectors and promote integrated working approaches for effective and lasting solutions for biodiversity and nature conservation efforts linked to local development.

In the first phase the NCP worked on many different activity lines on different topics (forestry, biodiversity, tourism, protected areas, energy efficiency, capacity building etc.). The NCP covered many different aspects in one rather marginal region, but worked also at Central level with the 2 most relevant Ministries (MOEPP and MAFW) and their agencies, in particular the PE Macedonian Forests. The complexity of this multi-level approach will be discussed in detail below.

The project is well known and appreciated by the main stakeholders, nationally and locally. It has established a strong basis for a multi-stakeholder approach and policy dialogue at all levels, with state institutions as well through the civil society. Furthermore, a strong and very comprehensive documentation and database regarding the natural resources of the region as well as their use in the socio-economic context has been collected and integrated into key documents like the Gap Analysis and regional strategies. This is an excellent base for implementation of strategies and actions plan in Bregalnica region, as well as more concrete field activities

There is a recognized significant lack of protected areas in the project region and a good documentation has been prepared in order to establish an adequate network; however there is no significant progress regarding designation of new PAs. Different approaches such as protected landscapes (IUCN category V), large scale biosphere reserves or a network of smaller strictly protected areas have been discussed to be established in the second phase of the programme. A large scale management approach (e.g. Biosphere Reserve, protected landscape or other approaches?) would allow to brand the region and to better link biodiversity conservation with touristic and economic development. Experiences within the area (Osogovo Mountains), discussions led with political authorities, and the current political situation indicate, however, that the potential for the acceptance of large scale PAs, parks or reserves, is very low and probably not a suitable solution for the time being, though the need for design and implementation of a Natura 2000 network, including larger as well as small protected sites, is acknowledged. Authorities fear that large scale “protected” areas might hamper economic development. The understanding about the objectives of such regional approaches (PAs closely linked with socio-economic development) is not wide spread and apparently weak among the local authorities.

Despite comprehensive and high quality preparatory work, the strong network built and the smooth collaboration with all partners, the programme however did not succeed yet to effectively link the different activities with each other in a regional management approach. At this stage the NCP still works essentially with a multidisciplinary approach, instead of an interdisciplinary one, which would combine natural resource management, biodiversity conservation including protected areas establishment, tourism, sustainable agriculture, forestry and overall socio-economic development.

However it has not been possible to really start implementing a network of protected areas as recommended and planned. It must underlined once more that a Natura 2000 network is an obligation for Macedonia in view of its potential accession to the EU.

The work at central level with the 2 ministries has proved to be highly appreciated, but the concrete outcomes are very difficult to measure. The weaknesses of some institution and their lack for intersectoral cooperation are real obstacles regarding an integrated approach. Changes in national institutions and policies will take much more time than a 4 years project phase. The main result is to foster the collaboration with the ministries and their agencies in the region and to reinforce the credibility and the acceptance of the project. This has been achieved and offers a good start for the second phase.

The selected partners have proved to be reliable and efficient. However some difficulties in attributing

mandates and tasks, in order to combine the Swiss and Macedonian operating procedures and rules, have lead to delays regarding several of the objectives. During the phase the procedures have been harmonized and solutions found. A transfer of responsibilities to the Macedonian partner and simultaneously more responsibilities to the implementers in the region are foreseen and will be welcome.

The choice of the Bregalnica region, rather marginal and much less "famous" than the SW, which encompasses namely the 3 Macedonian National Parks and which has received much more attention from the national authorities and foreign donors, is considered by all partner as very relevant. The regions deserves more attention and also the studies to date have highlighted some high conservation values which were not known by the scientific community. The presence in the region of several concrete important activities in the field of environmental protection and water management, supported by SECO, have given a very important added value to the project. This combined Swiss presence in the region has allowed to develop synergies and is highly appreciated by the local and regional actors.



Meetings with national and local authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders: most important considerations and findings regarding the current phase and proposal for the 2nd phase

The essential of the mission was dedicated to meetings with key project partners. It has been possible to meet representatives of the most important groups, with the exception of the Regional Planning Centre, its director being held abroad for unexpected reasons. All meetings were really friendly and discussions open and lively, with a high level of representation (national authorities). In addition we could visit a few small project sites (small grant component); we particularly appreciated the visibility of the Swiss intervention in the region (SECO and emergency assistance projects)

In order to somewhat structure the discussion with the project partners, they have been asked on advance to be ready to answer to the following questions:

- What are the most important and relevant activities and results of the current phase?
- Did you have any problem with the structure and functioning of the project and how did you perceive the role of the implementing organization? Do you have suggestions for improvement?
- What are your needs and wishes regarding the second phase?

It had been mentioned in the beginning of all meetings that the Swiss donor wishes to :

- continue in the same region and with the same main partners, providing that there is no major objection, and with activities linked to nature protection
- select activities based on a "demand-driven" process
- put a special focus on the sustainability of the supported activities.

In general, all stakeholders met underlined the usefulness of the project and the very good relations with the implementing organizations. They highly appreciated the choice of Bregalnica region, and had no objections regarding the fact that the project worked also at national level. When opinions were expressed on this topic, it was considered as useful or suitable to continue in a similar multi-level process. The small grant component, to Municipalities as well as to CSOs, was often highlighted.

We can safely say that the general positive appreciations regarding the project, its implementation and the partners was more than just politeness in presence of the donor's representative. We felt a real satisfaction especially from the rather neglected region to have such an opportunity to put forward its values and potential.

Key comments and suggestions from the main partners or groups of partners.

In order to synthesize and somewhat structure the numerous comments and suggestions received, we have aggregated the results of the meetings by categories of stakeholders (for example Mayors of Municipalities, local CSOs, etc.) However we have considered separately the 2 ministries as well as the EU delegation and the National NGO MES.

European Commission - EU delegation

The design and implementation of the Natura 2000 network (Bird and Habitat Directives) is a pre-condition for accession to EU. For this reason a meeting with a representative of the EU was requested; despite the lack of preparation, it proved to be very useful.

→ The contact will continue (to be maintained by the Swiss Embassy).

Macedonia is on its way to join the EU; a positive report was published in 2023. However there is no known schedule and opinions vary very much about the timeline. The EU has approved a project for

Strengthening the capacities for implementation of Natura 2000; it has 4 main objectives:

- Harmonization of legislation
- Potential of Emerald sites for implementation of Bird and Habitat directives
- GIS system in MOEPP
- Administrative capacity strengthening for implementation of nature protection legislation
- Public awareness campaign for N2K

The project was planned for 12 months and is just starting; it might be extended, due to some administrative difficulties. One of the main specific objective is to implement 7 N2K sites, based on the proposed Emerald network. This seems extremely optimistic! 3 main foreign experts have been selected and are already operational. NB: For feasibility reason, most probably the 7 sites will be concentrated in the National Parks (or other existing Protected areas). There is probably an opportunity to make a 1 to 1 test in our region - see recommendations below.

There are other possibilities of financing for multi-country activities. NB: TB projects are planned with Bulgarian partners and proposals submitted in the project area.

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - MOEPP

The 2 people met are heads of the Department for Nature and of the Unit for Natural Heritage Protection. They have very clear ideas of what they have to do. However the lack of political support in order to properly perform their task is a major obstacle. There are apparently only very few intersectoral (inter-ministerial) activities. Ca 9 % of national territory is actually protected; they expect 15 (- 20?) % for N2K. NB: this seems to be very low in comparison with similar countries like Croatia and Bulgaria, both with around 30 %. NB: it must be reminded that there is no state budget for management of protected areas, including the National Parks!

They are very satisfied with the support from NCP, especially regarding the National Nature Protection Strategy. They also mentioned previous positive experiences with SDC projects (e.g. Pelister NP).
→ despite the difficulties in reaching measurable objectives and current lack of inter-ministerial coordination, support at central level should continue

They also highly appreciate the Gap Analysis for Bregalnica region - which is part of the Green Belt; they also have good collaboration and appreciation regarding the awareness raising.

They expressed the following wishes:

- Development of Key species conservation in EPR - practical protection measures
- Continue (or start???) with PAs declaration
- Develop activities and awareness raising on Ecosystem services
- Use results from other projects and regions - e.g. Balkan Lynx project, etc.
- Promotion of natural heritage - include decision makers
- Adaptation to climate change - nature based solutions for flood prevention

Obstacles:

- Need to wait for Action Plan of the national strategy to decide which activities are priority
- Need more study to assess for which PA establishment consensus can be met
- High demand in the field of education and training for local authorities

Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy (MAFWE) - forestry and hunting

The structure of the Forestry sector is presented, as well as the main line (volume of authorized wood extraction!) of the 2004 Forest strategy. They would like to change the perception of people for forestry: "cutting trees is an activity in favour of nature"!

They appreciate the cooperation with Pharmahem, in particular the contact with Bern University - they wish to continue the collaboration.

N2K: they has initial contact with MOEPP; however they considered that MOEPP is competent regarding the forest only in National Parks! Consequently the N2K network should be limited to NP and other PAs.

They are responsible for preparing, implementing and monitoring the Forest management Plans. They control the measures for "improvement" of the forest, such as:

- Protection from illegal cutting (major threat) and illegal trespassing - they complain that tradition is stronger than law !
- Protection from forest fires

The forest police is in contact with people - advise to hikers, etc.

The % age of private forest has increased from 8% 10 years ago to ca. 10 %; it is expected to reach 15 % (church forests are considered as private).

The forests in Bregalnica region are very diverse, due to large spectrum of climate (Mediterranean to High mountain). In the Vardar basin with Mediterranean climate forest are mostly degraded. Forest cover is increasing due to:

- Tree planting - civic tree planting day
- Reduction of cattle - forest re-colonize graze land; they consider that even with financial incentive (EU measures) there will be no return to previous situation. NB: experience from Bulgaria demonstrated the opposite!
- Upper treeline in rising

They expressed the following wishes:

- They would like project implementation on a larger geographical area. NB: this was the only time we encounter such a request.
- They consider themselves as important actors regarding PAs; nature protection must be part of their management plans, which implies that the establishment of forest PAs is very unlikely in the short and midterm.
- They would appreciate training with new techniques for sustainable forestry - in future exclusively selective felling?
- Better training and equipment for regional branches - vehicles are 20 years old, lack of laptops, etc.
- Need for new technology - heating with pellets or wood chips; feasibility studies would be welcome

Public Enterprise Macedonian Forests - Department of Forestry products / Unit for organic agriculture

They appreciated the forest component of the NCP project, namely the workshop for young forester and the activities in Berovo and Pehcevo areas. The workshop in Kocani allowed to discuss about challenges and future trends of forestry.

They need training on "how much can be cut without damaging the forests". The Swiss expertise is expected. They have obligation to transform low stem forests in high stem forests and would appreciate

more technical support. The forest planning is done centrally, with little or no consultation with local people - even local MK forest! The municipalities have nothing to say concerning the forests and their management - see below meetings with Mayors.

They expressed the following wishes:

- Continue with the workshops
- Continue the discussion about the future of the forest; they are the people working in forests!
- Need new model of calculation for volume to be exploited; training is needed for planners on principles of sustainable forestry
- Training for guards
- Explore possibilities for wood heating and work on the marketing

Rice:

- Continue to develop techniques for rice production with low pesticide level as a model

Pastures: there are dynamic borders between pastures and forest - no clear definition. Pasture is done without regulations; people go everywhere! There is no damage on pastures from animal grazing.

In the past, degraded forest had to be replaced; nowadays, there are often transformed to pastures.

Macedonian Ecological Society - MES

MES is a very competent organization in the field of nature and biodiversity conservation. They have some of the best specialists as board members.

In general it is difficult to work for nature conservation in Macedonia; there is a need for a strong lobbying (in addition to awareness raising). Long term commitment is also essential.

Some procedure during the 1st phase were not completely satisfactory. It seems that the problem is solved (harmonisation of donor's and Macedonian rules); for the second phase tasks will be given as "grants" for entire project components. They would be ready to open a local branch if appropriate.

Example of complex procedure - regional Gap analysis:

The project contract is signed between SDC and Helvetas; then sub-contracts were signed with Pharmahem → CDEPR → Dekons-Ema → MES. This should be simplified if possible!

Protected areas: only 7, mainly small, exist in the region. The first step regarding establishment of new PAs is to complete valorisation studies and to obtain local approval. It is essential to present the benefits from PAs. The process should start with easy ones - away from economical interests. They also propose to work on 2 N2K sites - one for birds and 1 for habitats.

An alternative to PAs consists in working on ecological networks; MES is ready to propose a relatively detailed regional concept and measures for corridors, etc. They propose for example to work on tree lines (windbreakers) which would serve both nature protection and agriculture. MES would also like to work on flagship species. They estimate that small projects are better (more efficient).

Activities realized in the East Planning Region:

- Initiative for proposal of PA "Protected Landscape Osogovo", including protection of natural values, public awareness and socio-economic aspects in a participatory process
- Proposal for Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Osogovo (MK / BG) including activities which can contribute to fulfil BR criteria
- European Stork Village Initiative (Cheschinovo - Obleshevo municipality); general promotion of wetland and water birds in the area
- Educational trail "The path of Woodpecker - Vane"

- IBA "Dolna-Bregalnica"
- GAP analysis of the Bregalnica watershed including Ecological sensitivity map, identification of species and habitats and definition of PAs

It is worth mentioning that the specialists have, in the frame of the Gap analysis, discovered the richness of the region and some unknown values.

Proposal for future steps:

- Revitalization of riparian vegetation in compensation for habitat destruction
- Capacity building of local stakeholders regarding natural values and ecological function of key ecosystems
- Vulnerable habitats: protection of steppes, salt swamps, etc., and restoration of wetlands
- Develop a regional action plan for PAs, together with MOEPP and local authorities
- Protection of old growth forest - identification as small PAs and investigation of their role in Biodiversity conservation.
- Restoration of wind protection belts
- Protection measures for important species declining due to loss of habitats (Eastern Imperial Eagle, Stork, Lesser Kestrel)
- Work with MK forests on certification

In addition they suggest different actions at national level regarding large PAs and important species (Balkan Lynx, Vultures,)

Municipalities - meetings with 3 Mayors.

In general the Mayors are very satisfied with the project and its implementation. They have very good contact with Pharmahem and the regional office. They appreciate the activities and the visibility of the donor, and its presence in the region (unusual!). NB: they often mix the SDC and SECO projects, but the general visibility is important. The procedures were satisfactory with full transparency. They also appreciate the work with the ER Planning centre.

They appreciate the cooperation and exchanges of experience, as well as the awareness raising and education component. The small grants were very much appreciated, in spite of the limited amounts; they wish more concrete actions during the next phase; however they often mention need that are not related to nature and environmental conservation. Most of the small projects proposed by Municipalities in the 1st phase were related to energy saving and water supply - only one in nature protection.

The most commonly mentioned need is for infrastructures (roads); the second is water supply, waste water management and flood control

Forest were never spontaneously mentioned; for the Mayors they hardly exist, being completely controlled by PE Macedonian forest; they don't receive any benefits from the forest exploitation and have "just to fix the damaged roads". The agriculture was also seldom mentioned, with the exception of rice crop in Kocani. The Municipalities are also ready for reinforcement of their capacities.

The Mayors are satisfied with their regional cooperation (association); they seem to be ready for distribution of project important for the region among the different municipalities. Ex: the education Centre in Pehcevo will not be replicated in all municipalities; similarly future tourist information centre(s) will be limited to 1 or 2.

Kocani has 2 natural resources that could be better valorised as commercial and tourist attraction: thermal water (used for heating greenhouses and public facilities) and rice cultivation (in decline, worth being revalorised and improved).

The rice fields are 100% private. The brand is registered (protected); it was named the "white gold" in the area. Unfortunately the infrastructure inherited from the previous system for water supply fell apart and has been only partially repaired. In parallel new varieties were introduced. They used to have 10 small factories; currently an investor is ready to establish a big factory.

Suggestions for the next phase

Kocani:

- Protection of old oak trees (> 600 years) and picnic area around
- Energy efficiency
- Waste water collector in one village (1 million €!)
- Concept development for geothermal water
- Revalorization of rice production

Zrnovci:

- Road construction - dirt roads leading to the fields; help to farmer
- Facilitate transport for farmers (valorisation of their products)
- Drilling for clean drinking water
- Regional project: regulate the flow of Belgranica River with "steps" (concrete); this would protect the fish populations during the floods.

Pehcevo:

- Continue the support for the educational centre; they have no experience and need advice, especially regarding the sustainability
- Valorisation of the waterfalls; area with high O₂ concentration - recommended by doctors!; possibility for IPA TB application (with Bulgaria).
- Development of local accommodation - Berovo is much more developed!
- Awareness raising forum to change the mentality
- Filter station for drinking water

PE Macedonian Forest - local branches in Kocani and Berovo

The project, and particularly the forest component with intervention of the University of Bern was well received. Particularly mentioned were the field work with students of the Forestry Faculty and the workshop in Kocani.

Macedonian Forest are looking for new perspectives regarding forest exploitation; they welcome introduction of new techniques and exchanges with foreign experts. However they are so much in the system that it appears difficult to really implement the forest multi-functionality concept. There is also a significant concerns with the lack of integration of the forestry sector in other sectors at municipal and regional level. Moreover the centralized planning, controlling and forest police leave very little room for local initiatives. It was significant that the Mayors we met never mentioned forestry activities and project, with the exception of single remarkable trees in urbanized areas.

The new forest exploitation techniques, in particular the software applications for monitoring, were appreciated, inter alia because of the their efficiency (reduction of work for employees). They need to learn the "European practices" and to learn from Swiss practices. They would like to share experience of transforming low stem to high stem forests. An effort needs to be made on communication about the role of forestry for local people.

Protected areas, conservation of old growth forest and N2K are not on the agenda. There is only one small strict forest reserve (mountain Spruce forest). There is currently no certified forests.

Main issues regarding the forest sector

- Illegal activities (illegal wood harvesting, grazing in newly afforested areas).
- Fire set up in fields and pasture which spread to forests

Very few practical suggestion were made regarding the next phase, beside equipment and training. They mentioned tourism - though they do not even participate to trail marking!- and identifying and mapping of old trees.

→ There is an important need for information / education about nature protection in forest. A good information on N2K is also an urgent need. Certification seems an area to be seriously explored.

Civil society representatives - NGOs Javor, MSD, Milieukontakt Macedonian and Local farmer

Pharmahem received quite a lot of application from civil society organisations for the small grant programme. The representatives from NGOs we met were very satisfied with that component and the process - very good dissemination of information was underlined. The people we met were proud to show us some example of realization linked to conservation.

We met also a local sheep breeder who cares for the promotion of an endangered old traditional breed (Ovchepolka Pramenika). An effort for promotion of the local breeds and the marketing their products is needed. The current regulation ("thermic" cheese processing) is in contradiction with the tradition!

The sheep breeders receive subsidies for buying the sheeps and for their maintenance. They have every year losses provoked by wolves, which are not compensated. They also encounter problems with the water supply in the summer pastures.

Visit of small project sites

- Protection and valorisation of old Platanus trees
- Reconstruction and transformation of an abandoned school into an education Center
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- Protection of a small wetland near a village picnic and playground



- Bike and hiking trails establishment and marking



In addition we saw the insulation of a municipal building (Municipality block grants)

Proposals for the next phase

All the encountered partners wish the small grant component to continue, and if possible to be increased in the next phase. A few concrete suggestions were made:

- Info material for tourism development and tourist info center
- Capacity building for NGOs: awareness raising, media work, mobilisation of funds
- Training on goat breeding

- Agriculture: support for small farmers and wine producers (improved techniques, reduction of pesticides)
- Marking trails along the river
- Use the "resource centre" by NGOs and the club of young researchers
- Valorisation and protection of clear springs

Project office in Pehcevo - local activity coordinator

Through the establishment of the project office very good contact with local institutions, organization and people was established. The coordinator is very enthusiastic and energetic; her work is highly appreciated. A lot of promotion activities have been performed (radio, TV, production of materials, etc.)

The coordinators has supported the small project (Municipalities and NGOs) during the procurement procedure and the evaluation.

The role of the office is crucial for a comprehensive multidisciplinary regional approach. It has a coordination role for the strategy for tourism development. The maintenance of the documentation database is also essential. Close work with CDEPR is very positive and should continue - also in view of ensuring the sustainability.

The office will run a second awareness survey in order to assess the progress in this domain since the start of NCP. Two similar surveys should be planned for the 2nd phase.

The office works in close cooperation with the Planning Centre in Stip.

Special duties for the next phase

- Continue the multisectoral coordination role and the database maintenance
- Work on promotion of local products (branding)
- Coordinate with the NGO Oho the school activities
- Coordinate a basic concept for PAs and contribute to capacity building for nature protection

Centre for Development of East Planning Region

Unfortunately we did not visit the centre, the director being retained abroad due to unexpected circumstances. However the role of the centre appears to be crucial and highly appreciated.

The Centre should be the main instrument regarding the implementation of an interdisciplinary regional (watershed) approach. If this approach proves to be successful locally or regionally, it will be easier to start addressing environmental issues at national level in an interdisciplinary way.

General assessment of the project based on the documentation and stakeholders meeting

The project is addressing an important number of issues related to nature and environmental in an integrated regional development process of the Bregalnica watershed / East Planning region. In addition, or rather in complement, an assistance was offered to the most relevant ministries at central level. The weakness of the institutions and their lack of experience for interdisciplinary approach constitute a very big challenge for the project. However these weaknesses, coupled with the limited interest for the chosen region from the government and donor agencies, offer a very interesting field for exploration and experimentation of such an approach. Finally, the Swiss contribution is highly appreciated by all partners, which is clearly shown in the reports and was confirmed during the different meetings.

We shall address different issues and propose some recommendations regarding the second phase. Due to the transdisciplinarity which characterizes the regional planning approach, there is going to be a certain number of overlaps; however we have tried to separate the analysis in different chapters with specific recommendations.

The concentration on one region and 2 ministries, though complex enough, made it possible to have at the end of this limited mission, a comprehensive view of the regional development issues and the relation of local authorities and people towards their natural resources. In addition, the expert personal general knowledge of nature conservation and protected areas in the Balkan countries, and specifically in Macedonia and Bulgaria, allows to issue some recommendations regarding the focus and execution of the second phase. While the activities should be based on a demand-driven process, it will not be possible to accommodate all the wishes expressed locally and nationally, and deliberate choices will have to be made. Finally, a special attention should be put on the sustainability of the activities after the end of the project.

Main objectives of the programme and choice of the region

The main objective is to contribute to nature and biodiversity conservation in a relatively marginal area of Macedonia. This overall objective and the choice of the Bregalnica region¹ are very relevant for the following main reason:

- The area is relatively poor and has not received much attention; it is quite well defined geographically and is highly suitable for an integrated ecosystem (watershed) approach.
- The region has a good potential for sustainable or low impact tourism, more or less linked to the nature, and for development of certified local products and services.
- It has only very few PAs and no large one; it is therefore much less prestigious than SE Macedonia with its 3 well known National Parks, and there is less potential for conflict with large economic interests. This gap in protected area system is recognized and needs to be filled.
- The regional cohesion, with the functioning East Region Planning Centre and the association of mayors. The project and its activities to date are really welcome by all partners.
- The simultaneous implementation in the same region of SECO projects, more technical and with more immediate benefits for the local people, and of less immediate conservation activities.

The four outcomes which have been defined are only partially achieved. They were quite ambitious, given the low level of knowledge and capacities at regional and local level, and the lack of understanding and practice in transdisciplinary work. They were also expressed in relatively general terms which makes difficult the objective measurement of the results.

In general the project in its first 3 years has produced a lot of documents and very few concrete activities.

¹ We use for the report Bregalnica region for the Bregalnica watershed and the East Planning region, which largely coincide.

This is largely understandable and was a necessary first step; more studies and document preparation should be as limited as possible in the second phase, the focus being put on effective implementation of those already available. However general measures like capacity building and awareness raising must continue as a support to concrete activities, despite obvious difficulties to measure their impact..

The sector of agriculture has been touched only on a very limited way. If more importance is going to be put on the notion of cultural landscape, the incorporation of agriculture will be essential. Promotion of local varieties, breeds and products (branding) should be investigated in parallel with measure to protect the environment (reduction of pesticides and fertilizers).

The transboundary (TB) component has been almost completely neglected. This gap has to be filled during the second phase. Moreover in Western Bulgaria there is an ongoing project supported by SDC (cohesion fund) which has very similar objectives (Linking agriculture to Nature Protection) and which is the result of 15 years of parallel work in the respective sectors. Joint work across the border and exchange of experience (branding of local products, ecosystem services, Natura 2000 implementation, sustainable tourism, etc.) is warmly recommended.

Global assessment of the results at regional level

The project has initiated several studies, inventories, strategies and policy papers. Some have been completed, while others have still to be finalized. This very comprehensive work is the necessary basis for a nature-orientated planning process. Very important and high quality documents have been produced, in particular the comprehensive Gap Analysis. They clearly demonstrate the richness and high conservation value of the region.

The combination of the available documentation in a single database and the permanent work with the Regional Planning Centre give an added value to the sectoral studies and strategies.

At project level, very few concrete activities could be implemented beside training, general capacity building and awareness raising. In particular it was impossible at this stage to start implementing a network of PAs or a dynamic ecological network. Such networks need to be carefully planned, based upon a strong scientific basis, and following a largely participative planning process; this requires more time, especially when processes are new for a country or a region.

On the other hand, the small grant component, for the municipalities and also for the Civil Society, proved to be an excellent instrument for communication and acceptance of the main project goals. This was a good start but the type of project submitted, especially from the municipalities, showed the difficulties to make very attractive initiatives in the field of nature protection (many projects dealt more with technical environmental issues than real nature and biodiversity conservation).

The complementarities with the SECO project must also be underlined; both sets of projects are excellent for the image of the donor in the region and synergies for environmental conservation and water management can be demonstrated in practice (watershed - ecosystem approach).

Assistance at central level (Ministries)

This component of the programme adds significantly to its diversity and could have hindered its efficiency; however working at the regional level without the support of the national level would not make sense. Therefore it was justified to have this component and some of the initiated activities should go on. The biggest challenge will be to try initiating a dialogue between the 2 ministries, or even between the different units of the MAFWE.

Both concerned ministries have expressed their appreciation for the support received and their wishes for a continuation. However the situation significantly differs in the 2 institutions and therefore the type of support must be tailored accordingly.

MOEPP

They have enough knowledge and know-how to set up their priorities and to plan their implementation. However they have an institutional problem with the lack of political and financial support. They are often under pressure from the economy to delay or avoid restrictive measures in favour of nature. The achievement of the National strategy for Nature protection (still to be adopted!) and the comprehensive inventories in the East Planning Region were greatly appreciated.

We could continue contributing to some strategic documents, but the project should aim primarily at gaining consensus at local level through participatory planning processes and information campaigns for implementing priorities defined jointly with the MOEPP (small or large PAs establishment; integrated protection in larger territories; protected landscapes; introduction of sustainable techniques; etc.).

Establishment of a Natura 2000 network is a priority for the ministry; they have received the support from the EU for solving a certain number of issues and for testing the implementation with 7 pilot areas. They will most probably concentrate on the existing National Parks in the Western part of the country and no pilot site is foreseen in our region. We could take one area within our project region, selected on the basis of the gap analysis and the proposed Emerald network, and make a fully participatory preparation process for it, including socio-economic aspects and intersectoral activities. A small project financed by SDC and operated by REC Bulgaria aimed last year at making proposal to the Bulgarian government on possible implementation of the N2K network; the final report with analysis of N2K implementation in different countries and concrete recommendations for it in Bulgaria has been published at the end of last year (in Bulgarian only). It could be used as a source of inspiration in Macedonia.

The notion of Ecosystem services is often present, but remains very theoretical ("buzzword"). A comprehensive information campaign including example of such services in favour of local communities is a wish from many partners - see e.g. available study by WWF Bulgaria. More work could be done with MOEPP on this topic. In addition some specific species protection plans could be developed and implemented.

MAFWE - Forestry sector

The situation is different in a sense that they have the power and the political support, but are "blocked" in an extremely centralized and powerful organization with extremely rigid rules and very little space for innovation and initiatives at local level. The notion of Forest PAs is unknown in the Ministry - they consider that protected areas are under the MOEPP and must be limited to National parks as far as forest is concerned.

They work according to Forest management plans which are made by specialists from the central office. They essentially operate with clear cuts and are mostly preoccupied by problem such as control of illegal activities and trespassing. They are clearly not integrated at regional level with the regional planning, and even less with the establishment of a comprehensive ecological network.

The training for forestry students was highly appreciated; however the impact on the field work still remains to be demonstrated. Introducing in the practice the principle of sustainable forestry (selective felling, preservation of Old growth stands, abandon of monospecific reforestation) remains a huge challenge. Training and exchange of experience should continue, but the focus still needs to be discussed. In any case it will be difficult to identify clear and measurable outcomes. To have chance of success, this training should definitely be done at central as well as at local / regional level in parallel. In any case training and capacity building has to be coordinated with other actual or potential donors. The forest certification is certainly a field of activities which deserves more attention. Examples from Switzerland and other countries could be presented and the authorities could be supported for the establishment of the relevant rules and procedures.

Landscape / ecosystem approach requires the integration of forest management in the overall regional planning for sustainable development. A process to achieve this integration should be explored and used during the planning of the second phase.

The same applies to the agriculture sector - see below.

Agriculture

The agriculture seems to be sufficiently decentralized to allow the future activities to be exclusively concentrated on the regional/local level. We do not have enough information to propose specific activities; however we estimate that the support to rice production should continue, and include a promotion (marketing) component. Sheep grazing - including preservation of old breed - in another sector worth exploring, also with a promotion component. And finally branding of local products should be seriously envisaged and tested.

Activities at the regional and local level

The development of regional territorial planning with establishment of protected areas integrated into an ecological network with corridors and other linking elements should remain the main objective, though it might take significantly longer than the project duration to become fully operational. Technically the design of such a functional network should be feasible relatively rapidly, based on the very comprehensive documentation available; however its effective implementation had to be made step by step after careful preparation and large preparatory process. The integration of the network in the global socio-economic development is necessary and has to be supported by income generating activities at local level. However the main objective, integrated nature protection, has to remain the driving force and this must be reminded occasionally to the project partners and through the awareness raising activities.

Beside the preparation and implementation of technical actions, the project should continue to provide training and capacity building activities, as well as information and education campaigns. Such activities should be focused on the needs for and potential benefits from PAs and sustainable use of natural resources ("ecosystem services"), and should be aimed at creating a favourable climate for their realization.

These enabling activities should be planned at regional level, with a negotiated distribution among the municipalities and villages. Structures established locally should offer services for several communities or the whole region, and be addressed to a wider spectrum of beneficiaries. For example the educational centre cannot be replicated in all municipalities, and a tourist information centre should be located strategically and be completed by simple information points well distributed across the region.

The establishment of one large protected landscape area, including protected areas and zones for sustainable economic development, should be one objective of the second phase. It should include public and private owners and promotion of local product and services (branding). This would follow the same principle as a Biosphere reserve, but without using the name; another possibility to explore is the recently created geopark category by UNESCO. It would also constitute a pilot area for implementation of the N2K network in the region; the location has to be discussed with the MOEPP and the local authorities, but should ideally cover one of the foreseen Emerald sites.

Small grants to municipalities and civil society organizations

The small grant programme is an essential component of the project; it has certainly played a major role regarding the acceptance of the project and in establishing very positive working conditions. The accepted projects were all related to environmental protection; however only a few of them were addressing nature protection issues, especially from the municipalities. It was clear from the interviews that the mayors have more immediate needs than nature protection and would prefer more visible activities bringing visible benefits. We think that the scope of the grants has to be somewhat more clearly defined and communicated before launching the call for projects. We also think that it should be possible to finance some small infrastructures not directly related to conservation, but to request in compensation some active nature protection measures. For example a filter station for the uptake of spring drinking water should be linked to the establishment of a protection zone around the spring or covering a part of the watershed; or a concept for pellet or wood chips heating system should be associated to the

protection of old growth forest stands nearby. Such an example of limited activity has already been realized with the small wetland next to a playground and picnic area in Pehcevo.

The whole or a part of the grant programme could consist in already prepared projects that would contribute directly to one or more regionally defined activities. A call for execution could then be launched among NGOs. As an example a network of sites with remarkable trees could be created with production of joint information materials; the stands could be linked by a bike road with adequate marking and display of information on nature and landscape protection. At the municipal level a network of natural corridors along the main rivers with rehabilitation of stands of riparian forest could be created across the region.

Implementation and implementing partners

All partners were very satisfied with the implementation process. The only problems came from harmonization of donors et Macedonian rules for attribution of mandates and procurement. This appears to be solved and would allow avoiding the delays which were experienced more or less systematically during the 1st phase. The integration of MES and its role in the programme should be reassessed. The organization is at the same time a network of expert, and an NGO and sometimes functions as a consulting firm. An adequate status should be found for this organisation which is a invaluable partner for the project.

The coordination Helvetas - Pharmahem went very smoothly despite the fact that they hardly knew each other before this project. Pharmahem had proved to be a very good and reliable project implementer. and is very highly considered in the region. The collaboration should continue but with separate contracts, Pharmahem having the full responsibility for implementing the project and Helvetas having only an adviser role for the planning, monitoring and for ad hoc technical inputs. As a consequence, for and also because of reinforces focus on the region, Pharmahem should either reinforce its presence by enlarging its local office or by more presence of the managers.

In general expertise should be also sought in the neighbouring countries, especially in those which ave been through the process of EU integration. Moreover contacts with other relevant SDC supported project should be used (capitalisation) Most relevant projects come from West Balkan regions but also from the Visegrad countries

Coordination with other initiatives and projects

It is very important to ensure a good coordination with other existing or planned projects in the main fields of activities of the project, in particular projects linked to N2K - EU integration, forestry, rural development. This concerns mainly activities at central level, very few - if any - other projects being implemented or planned in the East Planning Region. The complementarities with SECO projects is a real plus and should continue.

Tourism - product and services certification

There is a real potential for developing income generating activities in the region, based on the tourism strategy. Small local initiatives should be coordinated by an organisation and organised around 1 information centre(s) and a network of information points. The tourist information centres / points can be easily combined with nature information structures.

In parallel the development of a regional brand for products and services should be investigated. Bulgarian partners (Bioselena, WWF) have the know-how, including concerning the political process for law and regulation changes as appropriate, and would be certainly happy to collaborate. See list of potential partners in annex.

TB collaboration and foreign expertise

It was foreseen in the project document to have transboundary activities but nothing has been realized in that domain. We suggest to reactivate this component, especially through direct contact at the civil society level ("official" transboundary projects must involve government institutions and become quickly very complicated). However, comprehensive exchange of experiences at all level is recommended.

Several neighbouring countries have been through the process of Natura 2000 establishment during their pre-accession process (Bulgaria, Croatia). They have also acquired some experience with the application for and use of European funds (which Switzerland does not have!). Switzerland (cohesion fund) has supported last year a small project to identify appropriate implementation processes for implementation of N2K in Bulgaria (REC Bulgaria). A report in Bulgarian language has been published end of 2015; it includes a study of N2K implementation in several European countries and proposes models of implementation for 3 regions of Bulgaria.

Another large ongoing project, called "Linking Nature Protection and Sustainable Rural Development" is financed by SDC and operates in 3 different regions and parks in Bulgaria. Particularly relevant for NCP is the Western Stara Planina region (NW Bulgaria - next to the Serbian border). The region has similar characteristics to Bregalnica (rural and relatively undeveloped, suitable for green tourism, no spectacular attraction, lack of large protected areas). It is implemented by a consortium of 5 NGOs (Bioselena, BBF, BSPB, WWF, Parks association) and supported technically by 3 Swiss NGOs (Pronatura, BirdLife and REDD)

Regional expertise should be used more; experts are working in a similar context and have been through the same development processes; there are also less expensive than Swiss experts! Moreover a lot of material has been published in Bulgarian language and can be directly used (film, reports, videos, press articles, educational materials, etc.)

Another relevant project supported by Switzerland in Slovakia aims at introducing sustainable forestry techniques in particular in protected areas (national parks, Biosphere reserves). It is operated by the State Nature Conservancy of SR, supported by the CDE / University of Berne and the Forest research institute / WSL. Exchange of experience might be useful between experts dealing with similar centralized forestry systems.

Planning process

In order to avoid a gap between the phases, a draft project document should be ready before the summer vacations. The planning process should start soon with the choice of a framework for the activities, and then with consultation of the different partners.

Based on the report of the first phase and with the help of the different reports prepared, Pharmahem should be in a position to propose the main objectives and more concrete outcomes for the second phase, in close contact with the Swiss Embassy and Helvetas, and after discussion with the relevant ministries and MES.

For the detailed planning of the second phase (selection of activities, identification of partners and outputs), we recommend to have a large multi-stakeholders workshop in the region at a relatively early stage, but after deciding on a frame of activities among main partners (SDC - Helvetas - Pharmahem). It might be advisable to hire an external moderator for this workshop and for the preparation of the log frame.

Conclusions - Summary of the recommendations

Continue in the same geographical area under same overall objective, but propose a **vision** for the Bregalnica region and re-formulate the expected outcome (more realistic and measurable).

Start the planning soon, based on the results and reports, with identification of the expected outputs and framework conditions. Prepare a list of outputs with the project partners (planning workshop and specific consultations).

Better define the outcomes; combine them under in 2-3 main objectives, with detailed outcomes more realistic, reachable and measurable. Continue to work with ministries, but separate completely the activities at the national level (ministries and national institutions); for those "enabling" activities, measurable outcome will be difficult to identify.

Transfer of responsibilities from Helvetas → Pharmahem; the role of Helvetas will be to assist the planning, the monitoring and to provide technical expertise as appropriate.

Re-examine the position of MES (and other organizations as appropriate) and the procurement procedures.

Continue activities in education, capacity building and public awareness rising.

If infrastructure projects are selected, request to link them with some nature protection activities (see above for examples).

Implement limited small (feasible!) PAs and well as species conservation programme.

Test one N2K large site (landscape approach with small protected areas, ecological corridors and larger landscape protection zone).

Integrate in this approach the agriculture sector and, as far as possible, the forestry sector. Foster the regional production by improving the quality and develop the marketing.

Small grants: built them into a more coherent "programme" which contributes better to reaching the defined programme outcomes

Implement elements of the tourism strategy and explore the potential for branding

Use neighbouring countries' expertise and work on transboundary issues.

Comparison with the Helvetas - Pharmahem positioning paper

In general we agree with most of the findings and suggestions for the next phase. We fully agree that original project design was very ambitious and the 2nd phase has to be more focused with more precise and more realistic expected outcomes. This should be feasible thanks to the comprehensive knowledge base built and the excellent cooperation "climate" established during the 1st phase. The project should produce less studies and strategies but concentrate on their implementation; concrete activities should also be more focused and offer a direct contribution towards achieving the set goals.

We propose a few amendments and some additional elements in order to complete the integrated approach. Main differences:

- we suggest to separate the activities at national level which are really specific and must be adjusted to the needs for each partner.
- Interdisciplinary approach is highly suitable at all levels; however we have serious doubts that it can be achieved at national level in the current context. Efforts should be done in that direction, but we do not think that our "small" project can achieve much regarding inter-ministerial dialogue and joint activities. While this should remain an objective, it will be very difficult to set concrete achievable outputs. Capacity building objectives should be re-defined concerning the national level accordingly. On the other hand we think that concrete steps towards interdisciplinary approaches can be achieved at local and regional level and the project can bring a substantial contribution. Results can later be

used to try to convince the national authorities of the need and opportunities offered by such an approach.

- we suggest to add agriculture (not only rice and bees) which is a very important component when applying the landscape / ecosystem approach.
- transboundary activities and exchange of experience must be fostered
- the proposed outcomes are rather means of achieving the goals than real outcomes (5.1). They should be reformulated together with the focus of the activities in a widely open planning exercise.
- we suggest as a test to implement a pilot project not only for integrative forest management planning, but including as well agriculture (pastures, etc.) and tourism (as a contribution to future Natura 2000 implementation)

Approach and design

We agree on more focus, but we disagree with the reduction of number of small activities; however these small activities should be better integrated.

Intersectoral and multistakeholder approaches are necessary in order to achieve the goals and to guarantee the sustainability

The sustainability for a reinforced CNDEPR has to be carefully considered.

Activities

The activities have to be discussed with the main stakeholders during a comprehensive planning exercise - see chapter on planning above.

It must be reminded that implementation of N2K is an obligation, but also offers possibilities for financing. The concept of integrated nature and landscape protection has to be explained and example proposed (visits - study tours?)

Transfer of knowledge / cooperation with other projects: use more regional (SEE) experts and develop synergies with other project in Bulgaria and around - see below.

Working principles and approaches

we support the introduction of Landscape approach, providing that there is a clear common understanding about the concept of Landscape. We also support the idea of up-scaling and better integrating the pilot activities as contribution to the set goals (see above).

Organisational set-up

We largely agree with the set-up while stressing the need to transfer step by step responsibilities to the Macedonian partners (namely in view of the long-term sustainability, we also encourage the project to develop partnership and synergies with the neighbouring countries and other projects in Central and SW Europe, in particular those supported by SDC

Risk analysis

We propose to add the refusal of the forestry sector to envisage a different role, more participative and orientated toward multi-functionality of the forest, and a different role of the foresters (different from the principle that cutting trees is their contribution to nature protection).



Nature Conservation Programme in Macedonia

Mission of Pierre Galland in Macedonia

15th – 19th February 2016

AGENDA

14.02.2016 (Sunday)		
	Arrival of Pierre Galland	
15.02.2016 (Monday)		
09:00-10:00	Meeting in Swiss Embassy	Frank Wiederkehr – Regional advisor on water Stanislava Dodeva – National programme officer
10:30-12:30	Meeting with PCT in Farmahem	Marjonka Veljanovska – Executive director Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programmme assistant Katerina Atanasovska – Programme asistant
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
14:00-15:00	Meeting in European Commission	Maja Bogdanovska Zendelska – EU Delegation Stanislava Dodeva - National programme officer
15:00-17:00	Meeting in MES	prof. Slavco Hristovski – president Robertina Brajanoska – Executive director Despina Kitanova – Project manager Metodija Veleviski – member prof. Ljupco Melovski – member Marjana Suslevska - National team leader Katerina Atanasovska - Programme asistant
16.02.2016 (Tuesday)		
09:00 – 11:00	Meeting in Ministry of environment and physical planning	Vlatko Trpeski – Head od Department of nature Sasko Jordanov – Head of Unit for natural heritage protection Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Katerina Atanasovska - Programmme assistant
11:30 – 12:30	Meeting in Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy	Vojo Gogovski – State advisor for forestry and hunting Jordan Zdravkovski – Head of Department for forestry and hunting Ejup Jahja – Chief of police forestry sector Bilen Saliji – Director of State inspectorate of forestry and hunting Marjana Suslevska – National team leader

		Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
13:00– 14:00	Lunch	
14:00– 15:30	Meeting in PE “Macedonian Forests”	Pance Nikolov – Head of Unit of organic agriculture Gjoko Portarski – Head of Department of forestry, hunting and design Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
16:00– 17:00	Wrap-up meeting in Farmahem	Not realized
17.02.2016 (Wednesday)		
07:00– 08:30	Trip to Stip	
08:30– 09:30	Meeting in Center for development of East planning region	Cancelled (Dragica Zdraveva – manager of CDEPR)
10:00– 11:00	Meeting with Mayor of Municipality of Kocani	Ratko Dimitrovski – Major of Kocani Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
11:00– 12:00	Meeting with head of Local branch of PE “Macedonian forests” in Kocani	Orce Dimitrov – Head of branch Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
12:00– 13:00	Lunch	
13:00– 14:00	Meeting with Mayor of Municipality of Zrnovci	Blaze Stankov - Major of Zrnovci Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
14:00– 16:00	Meeting with NGOs “Javor” and “MSD”-site visit to small project	Zaklina Golceva – NGO “Javor”, coordinator of small project Blagoj Danev – NGO “Javor”, assistant of small project Vasil Pendovski – NGO “MSD”, team leader of small project in village Morodvis Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
16:00– 17:00	Trip to Berovo	
17:00– 18:00	Meeting in Local office in Pehcevo	Jasminka Pashaliska Andonovska – Local activity coordinator Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
18.02.2016 (Thursday)		
08:30– 09:30	Meeting with head of Local branch of PE “Macedonian forests” in Berovo	Nikola Atanasov – Head of branch Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
10:00– 11:00	Meeting with Mayor of Municipality of Pehcevo	Igor Popovski – Major of Pehcevo Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
11:00– 12:00	Meeting with NGO Milieukontakt Macedonia-site visit to small project	Irena Karakutovska – NGO “Mileukontakt”, coordinator of small project Jasminka Pashaliska Andonovska – Local activity coordinator Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
12:00–	Meeting with local farmer*	Manoil Stefanovski – local farmer for sheep breeding of

13:30		Ovcepolka pramenka Jasminka Pashaliska Andonovska – Local activity coordinator Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
13:30– 14:45	Lunch	
15:00– 15:30	Site visit to ECNC	Jasminka Pashaliska Andonovska – Local activity coordinator Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
15:30	Trip to Skopje	Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
19.02.2016 (Friday)		
08:30– 09:30	Wrap-up meeting with PCT	Zora Urech – International team leader Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant Katerina Atanasovska - Programnme assistant
10:00– 11:00	Meeting in MES	Robertina Brajanoska – Executive director Svetlana Pejovic – Project manager Zora Urech – International team leader Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
11:00– 12:30	Debriefing Meeting in Swiss Embassy	Frank Wiederkehr – Regional advisor on water Stanislava Dodeva – National programme officer Zora Urech – International team leader Marjana Suslevska – National team leader Cvetan Nikolovski - Programnme assistant
12:30– 13:30	Lunch	

*This meeting was organized in the local office of NCP

Annex 2: References for relevant projects supported by SDC in Central and South-Easter Europe

Forestry project in Slovak Republic

CDE / University of Bern. Leader: Heino Meesen

Heino.Meessen@cde.unibe.ch

“Building capacity and new models for stakeholder’s participation in the management of Natura 2000 protected sites in Bulgaria”.

Foundation „Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe – branch Bulgaria” (REC-Bulgaria)

Seat address: bul. Tzar Osvoboditel 10, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria

Address for correspondence: 7 Paris str., office 17, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria

Leader: Ventsislav Vassilev : VVassilev@rec.org

Linking Nature Protection and Sustainable Rural Development (Bulgaria)

- Bioselena (agriculture / organic agriculture / branding)

Dr. Stoilko Apostolov

Manager

FOA Bioselena

www.bioselena.com

4300 Karlovo

36, V. Karaivanov str.

tel. 00359 33592038

GSM: 00359 887782575

- BBF - Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (education, PR, Nature protection)

Jordanka Dineva

Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation

<http://bbf.biodiversity.bg/index.php>

Help us save Bulgarian nature!

<http://en.forthenature.org/>

tel. + 359 896 79 89 02

e-mail: jordanka.dineva@biodiversity.bg

- WWF Bulgaria (Ecosystem services, financial instruments for conservation)

WWF Danube-Carpathian,

WWF DCPO,

Bulgaria

71 Knyaz Boris Str.,

et.2, Ap. 2,

Sofia 1000 Bulgaria

Bulgaria

Raina Popova - Green economy team – Expert Rayna Aleksieva Popova [rpopova@wwfdcp.bg]