



Danube Regional Project

Regional Grants - Second Round

Call for Danube Basin-related NGO Regional Environmental Projects

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), on behalf of the UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project, hereby announces the second call for proposals to support non-governmental organisation (NGO) projects related to the reduction of Danube River basin nutrient and toxic chemicals pollution at the regional level.

Regional grants are up to USD 35,000 each. In exceptional cases (proposals that involve more than three NGOs, require some form of construction or involve extended networking), the amount can exceed this limit by 50 percent (i.e. up to USD 50,000).

The deadline for submitting concept papers is September 2, 2005.

BACKGROUND

The Danube Basin and its Environmental Problems

The Danube is Europe's second-longest river, extending 2,780 kilometres from its source in Germany to its delta at the Black Sea. The river forms a political boundary for 10 countries with vastly different political, economic and historical backgrounds. It is also a cultural and romantic symbol of central Europe's rich past and hopes for future integration.

The Danube's drainage basin is extremely large and diverse. It hosts very different ecosystems, including various wetlands of European importance (e.g. karst caves, alpine and steppe lakes, floodplain forests, the Danube delta). With more than 80 million people living in its vicinity, the Danube's basin is the most international in the world. Countless tributaries drain into the Danube, including the Inn, the Morava, the Tisza, the Sava, and the Prut rivers.

Pollution remains a serious problem in the Danube region. The volume of nutrients — mainly from agricultural fertilisers and manure, and urban household sewage — that enter the Danube basin waters is very high. Nutrient pollution is the contamination of surface and groundwater bodies by excessive inputs of nutrients. Although the natural input of nutrients is a prerequisite for the growth of organisms (i.e. the natural food chain), while river floodplains can cope with even large amounts of nutrients, pollution is typically caused by human activities and includes point sources such as municipal sewage treatment plants and industry emissions (e.g. foods), while non-point sources refer to the spraying of commercial fertilisers and animal waste on agricultural land, from where it infiltrates groundwater or drains with rain water into creeks, lakes and rivers. Hazardous substances often cause water pollution. The term “hazardous” means substances that have toxic, carcinogenic, mutagenic, and teratogenic or bio-accumulative effects, in particular those that decompose slowly or are persistent and have a significant adverse impact on living organisms. Heavy metals

such as copper, iron, manganese, cobalt, zinc, cadmium, mercury, nickel, and lead are toxic substances (mainly from the mining and metal industries), which tend to accumulate in the food chain and represent a substantial risk to aquatic and human life. Numerous other hazardous compounds that cause toxic and/or chronic pollution are of an organic nature and stem from the chemical, pharmaceutical and paper industries.

This pollution has placed local drinking water sources as well as the Black Sea in serious condition. The situation is made worse by industrial incidents that spill or flush toxics directly into watercourses.

The August 2002 floods that raged through Central Europe and the Danube basin are evidence of other environmental problems. They were partly the result of past economic development decisions that led to deforestation and the destruction of natural floodplains in the Danube basin. Global warming also played a role. This degradation of the natural flood retention capacities also reduces the natural self-purification capacities for the uptake of nutrients e.g. in floodplains.

Preserving habitat for the rich and diverse natural species living in the basin is also a constant struggle. Some 80 percent of the Danube's wetlands and floodplains have been lost since the end of the 19th century, threatening the habitats of pelicans in the Danube delta, sturgeon in the lower Danube, beavers in the upper Danube, as well as the habitats of countless other species.

In 1998, the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC) came into force after ratification by eight Danube states and the European Commission (EC). The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) was created to coordinate the implementation of the convention. Since its creation, the ICPDR has been effective in finding consensus among basin countries on priorities and strategies for improving the Danube and implementing the DRPC. Successes include the improvement of tools to manage the basin, such as the Accident Emergency Warning System, the Trans-National Monitoring Network for water quality and the information system for the Danube (DANUBIS). In effect, the commission has done much to promote trans-boundary cooperation among numerous countries in a highly complex European region.

The objectives of the ICPDR's 2001-2005 Joint Action Programme for the Danube River Basin are directed towards:

- the improvement of the ecological and chemical status of the water;
- the prevention of accidental pollution events; and
- the minimisation of flood impacts.

In addition to these main objectives, the implementation of the Joint Action Programme will:

- improve the living standard of the Danube basin's population,
- enhance economic development in the region, contribute to the European Union accession process,
- restore the region's biodiversity and strengthen cooperation between the contracting parties.

For further information about the Joint Action Programme's objectives and directives visit:
www.icpdr.org.

The Danube Joint Survey published in May 2002,¹ identified various chemical pollutants such as heavy metals, volatile organic hydrocarbons, polar pesticides and pharmaceuticals that are directly affecting the chemical and

¹ Visit: www.icpdr.org.

biological status of the Danube River. The study on nutrients found different quantities of nitrogen and phosphorus in organic and inorganic forms along the Danube River, which indicated that the water quality in different parts of the river is contaminated. As a result, the middle Danube reach indicated eutrophication, which can cause the pollution of drinking water sources and decrease biodiversity in the long-term. Different hotspots were detected and prioritised based on the level of water contamination.

The *Trans-boundary Analysis* and other documents produced within the framework of the Danube Pollution Reduction Programme (1999, GEF/UNDP) are available on the ICPDR website¹ under “GEF Assistance to the ICPDR” and then “Danube Pollution Reduction Programme 1997 to 1999.” This site contains useful information about the sources of pollution and ways to address them in different parts of the Danube River basin. These publications contain maps with information on the pollution hotspots, wetlands and other useful pollution data generated in different pollution sectors such as municipalities, agriculture, industry, land-use and wetlands. Further information on the current UNDP/GEF DRP (2001-2006) is available at www.undp-drp.org.

The European Union’s Water Framework Directive is now the basis for river basin management in Europe and thereby is the platform for implementing the DRPC. The ICPDR has been entrusted to coordinate WFD implementation at the DRB level including the development of the Danube River Basin Management Plan.

Danube Regional Project

The Danube Regional Project (DRP) — officially known as Strengthening the Implementation Capacities for Nutrient Reduction and Transboundary Cooperation in the Danube River Basin — was launched on December 1, 2001 as the next phase of GEF/UNDP’s long-term commitment to achieving environmental health in the Danube River Basin. A key focus of the DRP is to strengthen the capacity of the ICPDR and Danube countries to fulfil their legally binding commitment to implement the Danube Protection Convention. Already well under way, the DRP is an umbrella for some 80 activities.

A recent success story was the significant support from the DRP for developing the Danube River Analysis 2004, the first ever comprehensive analysis of the environment and pressures impacting it, in the Danube Basin. The report was required by the EC to help to assess how Danube countries will meet the WFD by 2015. It also serves as a key step toward preparing the future Danube River Basin Management Plan (see the report at www.ocpdr.org).

To reduce nutrient and toxic pollution, the DRP works with a wide range of local, national and international stakeholders. For example, the DRP is helping national pollution control offices to assess which areas in the Danube basin are most at risk from floods washing hazardous substances into water bodies. The project works with farmers and farmer advisory services to improve techniques for applying fertilisers and pesticides. An activity will soon help Danube governments implement voluntary bans on phosphates used in washing detergents. And a pilot project will try to demonstrate the effectiveness of wetlands in removing nutrients from the river by retaining them.

The Danube Grants Programme is part of DRP Objective 3 to strengthen public involvement in environmental decision-making and to reinforce community actions for pollution reduction and the protection of ecosystems. In this context, the Grants Programme is also seen as "applied" awareness raising.

Objective 3 has supported the Danube Environmental Forum (DEF), a basin-wide network of NGOs. From 30 members in 2002, the DEF grew to 160 by mid-2005. The DEF’s capacity to implement actions for controlling water pollution has improved. Training materials about wetland rehabilitation and nutrient reduction have been developed in ten languages. In the future, DEF member involvement in developing policies will be supported through government partnerships (e.g. the Danube River Basin Management Plan within the framework of the EU’s Water Framework Directive).

The DRP's Communications Strategy calls for strengthening NGO communications. DEF members, for example, have already received support in developing products such as their newsletter, website and publications. The strategy opens the door for NGOs to assist in implementing communications strategies targeted at key audiences, in part through awareness-raising campaigns at the community level (e.g. for wetland restoration and changing land-use patterns). And the DRP will actively disseminate news about NGO activities to the people of the Danube through the media.

The DRP will be carried out over five years with a total budget of USD 15 million. The bigger picture is that the DRP is part of the USD 95 million GEF Strategic Partnership for Nutrient Reduction in the Danube/Black Sea Basin, one of GEF's largest and perhaps most ambitious water-related projects in the world. The partnership supports the goals of the Commissions for the Danube and Black Sea to reduce nutrient and toxic loads to the levels necessary to allow Black Sea ecosystems to recover their state in the 1960s.

NGO Contributions to Nutrient Reduction

NGOs and other stakeholders can contribute to the reduction of nutrients and toxics in the Danube River basin at both the national and regional levels. NGOs can undertake activities that lead directly to pollution reduction or facilitate the process of solving pollution problems. These projects could directly address the reduction of point and non-point sources of pollution, and confront the transboundary or national problems present in the identified hotspots. The nutrient reduction projects of NGOs can also take indirect approaches, such as preventing pollution generation by improving and raising industry and public awareness; facilitating the flow of information; assisting in the prevention of accidental pollution, promoting the production and use of phosphate-free detergents and the sound use of organic fertilisers. These projects should also facilitate the development and functioning of democratic processes by ensuring public involvement and participation in pollution-related issues and decisions.

They can present community views to decision makers as a bridge between officials and the general public, facilitate public participation in decision-making processes for Danube basin issues, or suggest alternative solutions for preventing or reducing pollution. Furthermore, NGOs can be a useful channel for the dissemination of information to the public, increasing their awareness of the problems and possible solutions. In order to fulfil their roles, NGOs concerned with the Danube basin need to strengthen various capacities. Awareness-raising can effectively contribute to expanding the common understanding of trans-boundary and even global environmental problems and respective solutions.

Based on the DRP grants experience with the first round of grants the overall majority of NGO activities supported by the grants component had an indirect effect on nutrient and toxic pollutant reduction in the Danube. This was expected since one of the strengths of NGOs is their ability to raise public awareness and change behaviours and attitudes to indirectly induce pollution prevention. However, a variety of NGO activities at the national level have led to direct nutrient reduction and the removal of toxins. These activities range from the removal of illegal dumps near waterways, to the reforestation of riverbanks to avoid erosion and improve water quality. Artificially constructed wetlands that can function as wastewater treatment areas were also planned, along with the management of hydrophytes and the management of nature reserves, improved water quality in ponds and the creation of new protected areas.

The most typical pollution source addressed by national grants in the first DRP Grants round was agriculture, with the most common theme being: 'Addressing flood management, irrigation, and drainage with attention to the associated pollution-related effects', followed in popularity by 'promoting eco-farming methods and alternative rural development'. The second most common target after agriculture was municipal discharge: 'Addressing urban waste-water collection and treatment'. The least popular part of the scope has been industrial discharges, with the specific aim of, 'Assisting in reducing the risk of accidental release of pollutants from facilities'.

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During the first round, NGOs contributed to this process through direct actions as well as through collaboration with other stakeholders. A range of stakeholders have been targeted during the first grants round, including farmers, authorities, school children, enterprises and designers. In general, the projects were able to reach a wide range of stakeholders, as expected. The biggest challenge for the involved NGOs and for the REC was to monitor and measure the extent to which the stakeholders are impacting the success of the project. This aspect of the work needs to be further improved and better tackled by the NGOs in the second grants round.

With respect to the tools used, considering the nature of NGO work, during the first grants round some lobbying and awareness raising is used extensively, whereas research and monitoring are less popular tools.

This DRP National Grants programme is a follow-up to the first round and is expected to enable NGOs of the Danube basin region to increase public involvement in nutrient reduction through “practical” projects, education and training, monitoring and influencing policy at local and regional levels.

ELIGIBILITY

Registered NGOs in the Danube basin countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine with an environmental focus and an NGO bank account are eligible for national and regional grants.

NGOs must propose a project that includes cooperation with an NGO partner (or partners) in at least one other eligible country. The project may be no longer than 13 months in duration (January 2006 – January 2007).

In addition, NGOs applying for regional grants are expected to meet the following criteria:

- a. readiness to develop an international project of up to 13-months in duration;
- b. commitment to cooperating with partner NGOs from other countries or sub-regions (i.e. sub-basins);
- c. a proven track record in project management;
- d. experience with water, agriculture or nutrient issues (preferred);
- e. English-language capability; and
- f. access to necessary equipment and facilities.

LIMITATIONS

- Grants will not support projects that focus on research or scientific work (unless they are linked to other aspects of the project); purely operational expenditures (such as salaries or office rent); purchase of land, buildings, investments, or vehicles not justified by the project’s aims.
- NGOs currently running a cooperative project supported by the REC cannot apply for another cooperative grant before the final report of the previous project has been submitted and approved.
- Under the regional grants, NGOs may not submit more than one concept paper as a lead NGO and cannot be involved in more than two concept papers. They may apply as a partner NGO in two separate concept papers.

- If an organisation is involved in two concept papers, the NGO must appoint different project coordinators for each project proposal.
- At the full proposal stage each selected NGO can benefit from only one grant.

PROJECT SCOPE

The main scope of the regional grants is to facilitate a regional approach to the reduction of both point and non-point sources of nutrient and toxic substances pollution in the Danube basin.

A regional approach implies cross-border NGO cooperation and multi-stakeholder involvement. NGOs are encouraged to cooperate and work in partnership with NGOs in neighbouring countries (e.g. within the same Danube sub-basin²) in addressing the cross-border and regional environmental problems related to nutrient and toxic substances reduction. In addition, they are encouraged to involve other stakeholders, such as local authorities, water-related institutions, the industrial sector and the agricultural community. NGOs are encouraged to involve other stakeholders, such as local (environment) authorities, water-related institutions, the industrial sector and the agricultural community.

These grants will help NGOs to manage projects that:

- directly contribute to the reduction of point and non-point sources of pollution;
- contribute to overall improvement of the monitoring system;
- address transboundary and/or national problems present in identified hotspots;
- prevent pollution generation by increasing public awareness;
- facilitate the flow of information to the public;
- assist in the prevention of accidental pollution;
- promote the production and use of phosphate-free detergents and organic fertilisers; and
- aid democratic processes by ensuring public involvement and participation in decisions affecting environmental quality in the Danube River Basin.

NGOs are encouraged to manage activities with **concrete and measurable impact on reducing nutrients and toxic substances**. Since the overall objective of the call is the reduction of the nutrients and toxic substances in the Danube River basin, all the activities must demonstrate the direct or indirect impact on the reduction of nutrients and toxic substances. This impact must be measurable through indicators which should be well defined.

Additionally the regional grants should:

- **Involve other stakeholders.** Projects should identify stakeholders from the water-management sector, decision makers in pollution-producing units and other key players, and actively involve them in project implementation.
- **Change consumer behaviour.** NGO projects using an awareness-raising or campaigning approach towards consumers must be able to demonstrate the impact on consumers' behaviour (in terms of reducing nutrient pollution, promoting best agricultural practices).
- **Serve as a model for other areas in the Danube River basin.** Preferred projects are those that use a replicable approach and serve as an example for other areas in the Danube River basin that have similar problems and framework conditions.

² The Danube River basin is divided into various sub-basins of its main tributaries, such as the Tisza River or the Drava River sub-basins.

- **Promote and assist the application of the Aarhus Convention at the national or local level**, especially by improving the [public](#) access to information on pollution and [their](#) sources and enhancing public participation in [decision-making](#) on Danube water-related issues.
- **Contribute to policy work at the national level**. NGOs are encouraged to contribute to policy development and political discussions related to nutrients in the Danube basin (e.g. national or local pollution abatement programmes, environmental education, the implementation of EU directives).
- **Apply a regional approach, networking with NGOs at the regional level** (i.e. across the entire Danube basin or within certain multi-country areas).
- **Employ a trans-boundary perspective**. Projects must increase the understanding of national contributions to transboundary environmental problems.
- **Use the watershed approach**, especially in projects addressing land-use development. NGOs should relate the source of pollution with the impact area when different from administrative or political boundaries.

The tools used can be diverse. The REC encourages NGOs to use one or several of the following tools in their project proposals under this grant programme:

- **Awareness-raising and information dissemination through the media**. The results of this commonly used NGO strategy must be disseminated within the project timeframe and the project outreach must be ensured. The messages and dissemination strategy should be clearly explained in the proposal.
- **Lobbying and campaigning**. We encourage NGOs to use lobbying activities in order to reach and influence policy makers, particularly those at the river basin management level. Campaigning can also be used to influence consumers, producers, local communities and various stakeholder groups (e.g. changing consumers' behaviour concerning fertiliser use, phosphates-free detergents, etc.).
- **Public participation**. NGOs are encouraged not only to reach the public and the producers of pollution but also to promote and facilitate public involvement in the decision-making process in relation to water management, [planning](#) and other relevant environmental processes [reducing pollution](#) in hotspot areas. At the same time such facilitation should not be limited to information dissemination and community involvement, but should also be present in active and lasting dialogue with decision makers, discussing problems and influencing the decision-making process.
- **Preparation for or participation in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive**. NGOs should actively cooperate with and assist the authorities in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, or its preparation. Activities including the different forms of information and active involvement of all interested parties including NGOs and affected public in phases I and II of the WFD, as well as the preparation for phase III when the information and consultation with the public, including users, should be organised for the draft RBM plan, are encouraged. Existing opportunities for stakeholder and NGO involvement — through River Basin Committees, for example — should be enhanced and improved.
- **Environmental education and training**. Educational activities, targeted at teachers, pupils, students, or other groups, which aim to establish an understanding of nutrient and toxic-related problems, should also provide measures to prevent and reduce nutrient and toxic-related problems in the river basin area.
- **Networking and partnerships**. NGOs are encouraged to develop networks and partnerships with other NGOs, as well as with other stakeholders from related institutions (e.g. with water and environmental agencies, industry, agricultural cooperatives).
- **Interactive case projects**. Activities consisting of concrete conservation, rehabilitation work and clean-up actions are encouraged. Their lasting benefit should be demonstrated.
- **Monitoring**. Projects which include environmental monitoring work but exclude work requiring sophisticated technical equipment and certified expertise are also encouraged.

- **Research.** NGOs can receive support for simple applied research projects which do not require complex scientific work (e.g. opinion polls or assessment of available data).

Innovative ideas for other tools that could prove useful in addressing the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution are encouraged.

Types of cooperation required:

a. Cross-border/region-wide cooperation

Only NGOs from at least two different countries working cooperatively to solve an environmental issue that affects them both (or all) can apply for a grant. Projects should address cross-border or region-wide environmental problems related to the Danube. Transboundary or cross-border problems should focus on a shared river, watershed (Danube sub-basin) or habitat. Region-wide projects typically deal with common issues that concern all the involved countries such as awareness-raising, environmental education, policy issues and public participation in decision making related to specific pollution problems.

b. Multi-stakeholder cooperation

Through these grants the UNDP-GEF and the REC also intend to promote cooperation between NGOs and other stakeholders involved in solving pollution-related issues. These include: local or central authorities, the business sector, farm organisations, and other relevant institutions.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS

The deterioration of groundwater and the eutrophication of surface water both stem from point and non-point sources of pollution caused by agriculture, industry and municipal discharges. The necessary nutrient reduction can be facilitated by improving our knowledge about pollution, improving the management tools used to prevent, reduce and treat pollution, and by establishing or facilitating processes that lead closer to solutions of pollution problems. The regional approach will be the key to the solutions offered by NGOs. The environmental issues that the regional grants must address are related to the deterioration of groundwater and the eutrophication of surface water, both stemming from point and non-point sources of pollution from agriculture, industry and municipal sectors as well as problems which relate to other water management issues.

Grants will be awarded to NGO projects addressing the following nutrient and toxic substances pollution-related issues:

Agricultural discharges

- Introduce and apply best agricultural practices to avoid, minimise and/or control non-point sources of pollution in the ground- and /or surface waters.
- Contribute to policy work (EU directives, SAPARD, common agriculture policies).
- Promote eco-farming methods and alternative rural development.

Industrial discharges

- Promote the best available technology, reporting requirements on pollutant release and transfer registers, and environmental management systems.
- Assist in reducing the risk of accidental release of pollutants from facilities.
- Address toxic substance pollution.
- Promote production and use of phosphate-free detergents.

- Address (alternative) treatment methods and/or practices that lead to efficient removal of nutrients and toxic substances.

Municipal discharges

- Address household waste management, like reducing the use of conventional detergents.
- Address urban wastewater collection and treatment.

Land-use and wetlands

- Address flood management, irrigation, and drainage with attention to the associated pollution effects.
- Save and protect the natural flood plains (buffer strips).
- Support conservation and restoration of floodplains and wetland habitat.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process has two stages. In the first stage, NGOs should submit a short concept paper briefly describing the proposed project activities and expressing their interest in cooperating to solve a cross-border or region-wide environmental problem. Only successful NGOs from the first application phase will enter the second stage. The best proposals will be selected by December 2005. Here are the stages of the application process for obtaining a DRP grant:

STAGE 1. CONCEPT PAPERS

1. CHOSE PARTNERS

The concept paper should involve NGOs from at least two different countries. NGOs may wish to consult the following resources for identifying their partners:

- The REC's *NGO Directory* — A hard copy of the directory is available at REC country offices. The directory can also be accessed or ordered online.³
- Personal contacts.

Apart from the NGOs, partners must also be different stakeholders relevant to the project scope and area who should be involved in the project implementation.

2. SUBMISSION OF CONCEPT PAPERS (Deadline: September 2, 2005)

The concept paper must be submitted in English and include the following:

- **Concept paper form:** Applicants must fill out the attached form and prepare a brief project description following the instructions provided in the form template.
- **Statement of cooperation.**
- **Project preparation grant application.** Writing a full proposal for a cooperative grant may be challenging since the project partners come from different countries. Therefore, a “start-up” grant of up to USD 1,500 is available to give you the opportunity to meet project partners (NGOs and other stakeholders) and prepare the full proposal. The meeting can take place in any of the countries involved in the project. The only costs that can be covered by the REC are related to travel, accommodation and food.
- **Eligibility documents:** All lead and partner NGOs involved in the concept paper that request funding from the REC should provide the following documents separately:

³ Visit: www.rec.org/REC/Databases/NGODirectory/.

- a copy of their NGO's registration;
- a letter of support from the president or director of their NGO — the letters should demonstrate the commitment of the NGO to implementing the project and show support for the person nominated as project coordinator; and
- short organisational profiles, including a brief presentation (a leaflet or brochure would suffice), a list of projects implemented and the annual budgets (in EUR) from the past three years.

The lead NGO is responsible for submitting the complete original concept paper to the REC's head office in Szentendre by the given deadline. All NGOs involved in the concept paper must send copies of this document to the REC offices in their countries. The concept paper must be sent in its original form, by post to the REC head office (fax and e-mail submissions will not be considered). The concept paper must arrive at the REC offices by the end of the day September 2, 2005, or it will not be accepted.

3. EVALUATION OF CONCEPT PAPERS (September 16, 2005)

The concept papers will be evaluated by a panel consisting of REC experts and a representative of the DEF,⁴ ICPDR⁵ and DRP.⁶ The REC country offices and the NIS partners will also review and provide comments on the concept papers.

Projects will be selected according to the following criteria:

- **Relevance to the issue:** Does the identified action address a regional/cross-border problem related to the grant's scope as stated in the announcement?
- **The impact of NGO activities:** What does the project intend to improve or change? Are goals and objectives contributing to the grant's scope?
- **Approach:**
 - Are the methodology and tools proposed appropriate/realistic for solving the problem? To what extent are NGOs using the suggested tools and approaches outlined in the announcement?
 - Regional NGO cooperation: Is the cross-border or regional NGO cooperation feasible and are the partners committed?
 - Involvement of other stakeholders: Are the identified stakeholders willing to cooperate with the NGOs in addressing the regional problem?
- **The capacity of the NGOs:** Are the NGOs qualified (previous project management experience/annual budgets)?

The REC strongly recommends that applicants take the selection criteria into consideration when preparing the concept paper. The concept papers will be scored and ranked against these criteria. The top concept papers will be selected on this basis.

After the concept paper evaluation meeting, conditions, preconditions, recommendations and suggestions for improving the quality of the proposals will be given to the selected NGOs.

⁴ DEF - Danube Environmental Forum, the region-wide NGO platform established to support NGO involvement in Danube basin issues

⁵ ICPDR – International Commission for the protection of the Danube River

⁶ DRP – Danube Regional Project

4. TRAINING ON LOG FRAMEWORK AND MEDIA (September 30, 2005)

A short training will be organised by the REC at the regional level to assist the short selected NGOs during the concept-paper stage in preparing full proposals. The training costs for the participants will be covered by the REC. Training will cover two major components:

I. Component one: the LOG framework approach, to assist NGOs with project planning, consisting of three parts:

1. Introduction to the logical framework approach;
2. The LOG frame process (analyses of the problem, objectives setting, indicators, planning phase);
3. LOG frame matrix for a REC project design.

II. Component two: media session will aim to:

- prepare the selected NGOs to include media and communication components in their proposals;
- assist the NGO applicants with hands-on skills in mass-media communications and holding media events that they should employ during project implementation.

STAGE 2: FULL PROPOSAL

5. SUBMISSION OF FULL PROPOSALS (Deadline November 11, 2005)

The NGOs whose concept papers are approved in stage 1 are eligible for a project preparation grant and a start-up grant. The purpose of the start-up grant is to help partners meet and work together on a full proposal. The exact amount of the start-up grant, which cannot exceed USD 1,500, will be approved during the evaluation of the concept paper. The funds will be transferred to the lead NGO's bank account. The project coordinator of the lead NGO must keep careful records of how the money was spent and submit a report together with the full proposal. This project preparation phase will be during October-November 2005. NGOs prepare the full proposals taking into consideration the comments and recommendations from the concept paper evaluation. Additionally the NGOs should pay attention to the instructions and tips they will get at the trainings on the LOG framework and media work.

The full proposal must arrive at the REC's head office and country offices by the end of the day on November 11, 2005. Only proposals sent by mail will be accepted.

6. EVALUATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS (December 2, 2003)

An independent expert panel will evaluate all proposals. The expert panel will consist of: three representatives of the REC NGO Support Programme; three independent expert evaluators (DEF/ICPDR members can be independent expert evaluators); and one representative from the donor (DRP).

The proposals are first pre-screened by REC staff for completeness. The expert panel will then review the proposals and score and rank them based on the following standard criteria:

Environmental impact

- Measurable results lead directly or indirectly to nutrient pollution reduction.
- Process and stress reduction indicators are clearly defined.

NGO approach/methodology

- Feasible and effective methods are used.

- Trans-boundary perspective/watershed approaches are applied.

Cooperation

- Feasible regional/cross-border cooperation is demonstrated.
- Multi-stakeholder cooperation is involved.

Proposal quality

- There is a reasonable and realistic action plan.
- The budget is cost effective.

Staff capability

- Staff experience and competence on the issue exists in all NGOs involved.

The REC country office and EECCA REC partners will contribute to the evaluation with their comments on the issues relevant to the particular country, the methods employed by the NGOs, and staff capacity.

7. WINNERS' MEETING (January 13, 2006)

Grant winners will be notified and invited to the REC's head office in Szentendre, Hungary for a "winners' meeting." The REC will invite project leaders and partners to this meeting.

During the winners meeting the NGOs will: present their joint projects to the other grantees, become familiar with the REC's reporting forms and requirements and review and sign the award agreement. This document specifies the reporting conditions and disbursement schedule. The grantees will meet the grant officer and a financial assistant from the REC's head office, who will work closely with them throughout the project's implementation.

8. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (January 2006 – January 2007)

Grant winners should expect the first grant instalments within one month after the award agreement has been signed. The team will manage the project implementation within the given time frame according to the approved project proposal. The REC's assigned grant officer will monitor the project's implementation through direct contact and field visits.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information on this grant programme, interested parties can:

- visit the website: www.rec.org/REC/Programs/NGO_Support/Grants/RegionalDanubeGrants/ or
- contact Richard Filcak at the REC's head office (e-mail: rfileak@rec.org; tel: [36-26] 504-000; fax: [36-26] 311-294).

More information on the overall Danube Regional Project can be found on the UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project web page: www.undp-drp.org.

The REC's country and field offices will also be available to provide assistance.

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The original concept papers should arrive by post at the REC's head office (Ady Endre ut 9-11, 2000 Szentendre, Hungary) by the end of the day on September 2, 2005. Copies of the concept papers should also be sent to the REC's country office in each partner's country.

In addition to the second round of regional grants, the REC is managing, on behalf of the UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project, the second round of national grants to NGOs in the Danube River basin, in order to address nutrient issues at the national level by involving other stakeholders. More information on these national grants can be found at:

www.rec.org/REC/Programs/NGO_Support/Grants/NationalDanubeGrants/



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Call for Danube Basin-related NGO Regional Environmental Projects

CONCEPT PAPER FORM

Please type or write neatly in dark ink. The form for concept papers should be submitted together with a complete project description, a statement of cooperation from the partner(s), and the project preparation grant and partner request form (if applicable). Cooperating partners must sign the statement of cooperation. If there are more than two partner NGOs, please make copies of the statement of cooperation for every group.

REC PROJECT NUMBER (to be filled in by the REC):	
Project title:	

Lead NGO Information

Name:			
Registration number:		Telephone:	
E-mail address:		Fax:	
Address:			
Project coordinator:			
Name of individual preparing this proposal (if different from above):			
Project duration (number of months):		Total project budget amount requested from the REC (in USD):	
Bank name:		Name of the account holder:	

Bank address:		Account number and SWIFT code:	
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide your project description, addressing each of the three points below. Limit the description to two A4 pages.

1. Identify and describe the Danube basin-related issue (focusing on nutrient and toxics reduction) your project will address and specify why it is a problem for each of the partner countries. Explain how this problem relates to the environmental issues mentioned in the grants announcement. When describing the environmental problem please refer to the list of topics given in the announcement and describe which heading your project falls under (i.e. land-use and agriculture, water management, industry or municipal issues).
2. Describe the actions you will take to address this environmental issue and provide a timeline for completing these tasks. The project implementation timeline should not exceed 13 months from the starting date (January 2006). The goals, objectives and expected results of the project should be clearly specified.
 - i. Indicate the methods or approaches identified in the announcement that you intend to employ.
 - ii. Indicate the tools you will apply to this approach. Please refer to the explanations provided in the announcement about each of the tools.
3. Estimate the total budget for the project. Explain how much will be required from the REC and how much funding you have from other sources. Regional grants are up to USD 35,000 each. In exceptional cases (proposals that involve more than three NGOs, require some form of construction or involve networking) the amount can exceed this limit by 50 percent (i.e. a total of USD 50,000).



Danube Regional Project

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PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT REQUEST

In order to assist you in preparing the full proposal, the REC offers up to USD 1,500 to cover travel, hotel and meal costs for a meeting between the partners. NGOs are expected to absorb any costs that exceed this amount. The REC does not pay per diems. Because the REC encourages the use of the most environmentally friendly form of transportation, travel to the meeting by train, bus or car should be considered in this order. Air travel will only be accepted when the travel distance is very large.

Estimate the costs of partner travel, accommodation and food up to a **total of USD 1,500**. Do **not** include per diems.

Item	Cost
Travel: (names of those travelling, destination, price)	
Accommodation: (# of people X # of nights X price)	
Food: (# of people X # of meals X price)	
Total	

Please sign and date this concept paper:

Signature of project coordinator (if your NGO has an official stamp, please stamp here)	Date:



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STATEMENT OF COOPERATION

Project title:	
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Statement:

By signing this statement of cooperation, we agree to work together throughout the project’s preparation and implementation. If this concept paper is approved, we plan to meet and develop the full proposal. If the proposal is selected, we shall implement the project together. We agree that the lead NGO is responsible for communicating and presenting all materials to the REC. The lead NGO is also responsible for the project’s overall management.

Partner NGO Information

Name:			
Registration number:		Telephone:	
E-mail address:		Fax:	
Postal address:			
Name of the project coordinator of the partner NGO:			
Signature and date: (please stamp your name)			
Name of the project coordinator of the lead NGO:			
Signature and date: (please stamp your name)			

Note: If more than two organisations are cooperating on this project, please copy the statement of cooperation as needed. The lead NGO should send the signed statements to each partner NGO(s) for signature. The partner NGO(s) should return the signed statements to the lead NGO, who will include them in the concept paper package.
