

**Biodiversity Conservation & Economic Growth
(BCEG) Project**

QUARTERLY REPORT

November 2000 – January 2001

Submitted by:

Peter Hetz

Team Leader and Chief of Party

ARD, Inc.

Bulgaria Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project

is a collaborative initiative between the

United States Agency for International Development

and the

Government of the Republic of Bulgaria

implemented by

Associates in Rural Development, Inc.

Project Number LAG-I-00-99-00013-00

Table of Contents

Acronyms	ii
Preface	iv
1. Introduction	1
2. Results Framework	3
3. Planned Activities	5
Result 1	5
Result 2	10
Result 3	12
4. Project Management and Administration	15
4.1. Project Coordination and Supervision	15
4.2. Project Staff	15
4.3. Office	16
4.4. International Technical Assistance	16
4.5. National Technical Assistance	16
4.6. Purchase Orders	16
4.7. International Training and Workshop Events	16
4.8. International Travel	17
4.9. Networking and Partnerships	17
Appendices:	
Appendix 1	Guidelines for Public Information & Participation leading to Public Hearings for National Park Management Plans
Appendix 2	Memo from USAID to the MoEW of December 13, 2000
Appendix 3	Comments and Observations on the Draft Environmental Protection Act of December 2000
Appendix 4	Campaign for Media Coverage of the launching of the publication “Green Gold of Bulgaria” and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding
Appendix 5	Clearing House Mechanism Concept Paper and Scope of Work
Appendix 6	Report on Participation in a course on Business and Ecology, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, July 10-21, 2000
Appendix 7	Report on Participation in a Workshop on Implication of Land restitution Programs on Achieving WB/WWF Alliance Targets in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region, Brasov, Romania. November 9-10, 2000
Appendix 8	Macedonia Trip Report

Acronyms

AED	Academy for Educational Development
ARD	Associates in Rural Development, Inc.
BCEG	Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project
BSBCP	Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program
CBD	Convention for Biological Diversity
CBNP	Central Balkan National Park
CEU	Central European University
CHM	Clearing House Mechanism
COM	Council of Ministers
CRP	Contract Results Package
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Act
EU	European Union
FY	Financial Year
GEF	Global Environment Facility (note the acronym “GEF” is also generically in Bulgaria for the USAID/GEF Biodiversity project)
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOB	Government of Bulgaria
GWU	George Washington University
IQC	Indefinite Quantities Contract
MA	Master of Arts
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MEPF	Municipal Environmental Protection Fund
MOEW	Ministry of Environment and Waters
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Management Plan
NEPF	National Environmental Protection Fund
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NNPS	National Nature Protection Service (of MOEW)
NP	National Park
NTNR	Non-Timber Natural Resources
PCT	Project Counterpart Team

PC3	Public Computer and Communications Center
PEPUP	Public Enterprise for Physical and Urban Planning
PMU	Project Management Unit
Q&A	Questions and Answers
REC	Regional Environmental Center
RIEW	Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Waters
SOW	Statement of Work
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wilderness Fund

Preface

The Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth (BCEG) Project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development, (USAID), as part of its strategic support to the Republic of Bulgaria. The Project is sponsored by USAID in conjunction with the Government of Bulgaria – the Ministry of Environment and Waters (MOEW). The Project is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two governments, and its implementation covers the period: May 2000 – October 2002.

This Project is a logical evolution of earlier USAID assistance to biodiversity conservation in the country. It follows some 10 years of assessment, technical assistance and financing of Bulgaria's biodiversity conservation strategic development, new protected areas legislation, and new national park institutions. The Project is designed to capitalize on the achievements of the Bulgaria Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Biodiversity Project (implemented during the period June 1995-April 2000), and builds on lessons learned.

The BCEG Project addresses six specific contract themes known as “contract result packages”. The BCEG Project includes the finalization and implementation of two national park management plans, the development of a new management plan for Rila Monastery Nature Park. It assists in the development of financial mechanisms and strategies to ensure the solvency of national parks. The Project pilots economic growth activities with select target groups around two Bulgarian national parks. And it continues to build on the principles of strong public information and awareness as stepping stones for informed public engagement and promotion of biodiversity conservation and protected area management activities.

This Project is issued as a Task Order (Contract Number LAG-I-00-99-00013-00) under the USAID Global Biodiversity and Forestry Indefinite Quantities Contract (IQC); and is implemented on behalf of USAID by Associates in Rural Development, (ARD) Inc., of Burlington, Vermont, USA.

The Project is implemented through a Project Management Unit (PMU) based in Sofia, and includes a Team Leader, three Bulgarian technical specialists, and support staff. Project activities are coordinated through two mechanisms –

- (a) Project Counterpart Team – PMU staff and MOEW/NNPS counterparts
- (b) Project Coordination Group – that serves as a steering committee for Project planning and monitors implementation. This consists of the National Nature Protection Service of the MOEW, and national park directors, the PMU and USAID.

The Project is largely implemented through the Directorates for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks. Additional technical assistance is provided by Bulgarian and international consultants, and is based on specific terms of reference.

1.0 Introduction

BCEG Project activities are guided by a life of project work plan, implemented through an annual work plan. Reports regarding progress are required quarterly.

USAID manages this contract using two mechanisms – a project officer or Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) based in Washington D.C., and through the USAID Bulgaria’s program unit – specifically an assistant program officer responsible for elements of the USAID-Bulgaria portfolio including “Special Initiatives and Cross-cutting Programs”.

This quarterly report covers the three-month period, **November 2000-January 2001**. Earlier delays in the formalities governing the Project’s Memorandum of Understanding were remedied. The MOU was signed between the Governments of the USA and Republic of Bulgaria, on November 30, 2000. The Memorandum reflects the respective commitment of each Government to the successful implementation of this Project. A Project Counterpart Team (PCT), comprised of NNPS staff, was assigned in December of 2000.

During this period, the draft Work plan was modified and approved to reflect the negotiated changes to some of the Project’s timetables.

The Work Plan and Quarterly report format reflects six contract results packages (CRP) – or distinct project themes. These include:

- Contract Result Package 1* Finalize Management Plans for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks, and deliver to the Council of Ministers
- Contract Result Package 2* Effective Management and Priority Actions of Management Plans Supported
- Contract Result Package 3* Park-related eco-enterprises demonstrated for ecotourism and natural, non-timber resources collection
- Contract Result Package 4* Mechanism for National Park Financial Sustainability Established
- Contract Result Package 5* Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan Prepared
- Contract Result Package 6* Public Awareness and Promotion Campaigns Implemented

Additional planning and reporting themes include: Project management and Administration, Networking and Partnerships, and Special Project Issues.

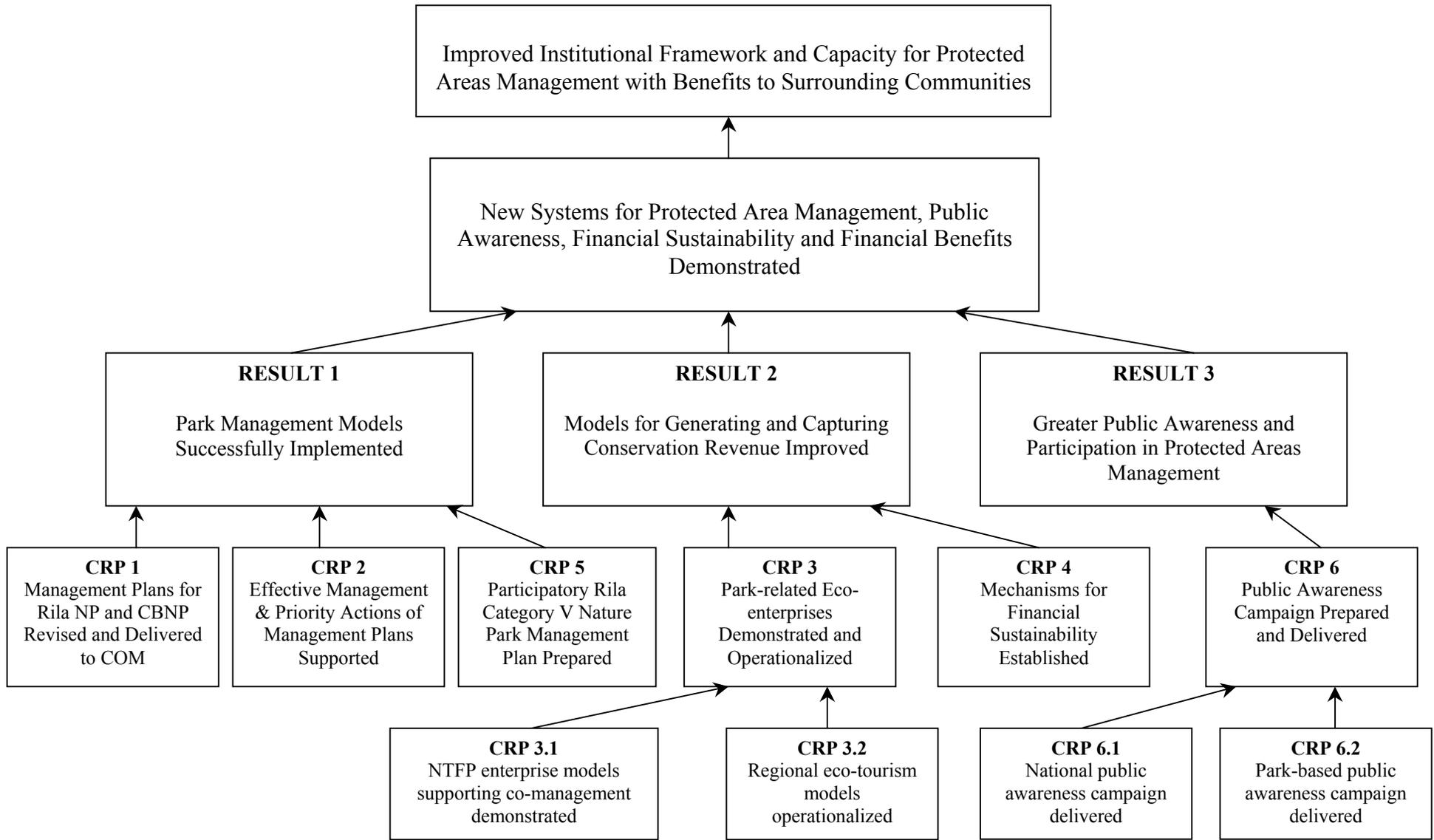
2.0 Results Framework

The aim of the Project is to contribute to the improved institutional framework and capacity for protected areas management in Bulgaria with benefits to communities surrounding key protected area sites. A secondary objective is to demonstrate new systems for protected areas management, public awareness, financial sustainability and financial benefits. In order to achieve this hierarchy of objectives, the Project supports three direct results, or outcomes:

- Park management models are successfully implemented
- Models for generating and capturing biodiversity conservation revenue are improved; and,
- Greater public awareness and participation is demonstrated in protected areas management

Project reporting is guided by the six results packages. Each quarterly reports uses the six results package to reports on a set of activities covered by the reporting period, quantifies results/activities, and identifies constraints to achievement of project targets. Finally, each result package includes recommendations for actions or amendments to work plan implementation that will guide activities during the following quarter, and/or life of project activities.

Figure 3.1 Results Framework



3.0 Planned Activities

Result 1 Park Management Models Successfully Implemented

This result is supported by three (3) contract results packages (sets of activities). These include:

CRP 1 Management Plans for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks revised and delivered to Council of Ministers for approval.

Mihail Mihailov, has been appointed to the BCEG Project as the counterpart team member responsible for park management planning, management plan implementation, Rila Monastery Nature Park management planning, and all subsequent issues arising.

Management Plans

Both Management Plans were again scrutinized by the National Nature Protection Service for (a) editorial changes, (b) policy interpretation, and (c) application of limits and restrictions governing construction and natural resource use. Management plans were approved for release to the public at the end of January 2000. The delay in Government review of the plans (of approximately one month) was due to the Christmas holiday period, and an intensive engagement of NNPS in legislative drafting activities and other bilateral program activities in Bulgaria.

For the second time, the NNPS called the National Park Directorate representatives to Sofia for these intensive discussions. Park Directorate participation in the finalization of these Plans has again been formally noted. This is an important acknowledgement of Park participation in the development of management plans¹. While the level of discussion with NNPS again reflects that the absence of protected area management policy guidelines, development of these two national park management plans is helping to interpret the gaps in policy. These efforts to seek a collective interpretation and development of policy have been beneficial.

N.B. As a preamble to bringing some of these management policies and their development to a head, the BCEG project facilitated two management policies sessions with national park directorate staff. The results of these sessions have been mooted with NNPS, and are included as park-wide policies and management guidelines in both management plans. While not exhaustive, they provide an important precedent and are included in the final draft of the management plans for both national parks.

¹ Park Directorates are considered clients under the Regulation Governing Protected Areas Management Plans in Bulgaria. While the Project has engaged the Park Directorate at every phase of management plan development, (and as part of an inter-disciplinary process) the request to include them in finalization of the Plans is important, formal acknowledgement of the Directorate's role. It also demonstrates NNPS' acknowledgement of the need for institutional "ownership" of the management planning process and its products.

Revisions and improvements to both management plans (prior to their release to the public) now include, for example:

- New management zone maps, and management zone designations;
- Limits to new construction in the Park;
- Limits on tourist accommodation (inclusive of size and capacity);
- Additional information relating the content and objectives of management plans to the Medicinal Plants Act;
- Improvements to pedestrian and vehicular access and control;

Public Hearings of Management Plans

With the approval of the MOEW/NNPS, management plans are now subject to a minimum period of 20 days of public scrutiny and review, prior to a public hearing event.

The Project developed a Public Hearing Strategy and Action Plan with Park Directorates for each park. The Project's Guidelines for Public Information & Participation leading to Public Hearings for National Park Management Plans are attached as **Appendix 1**. These are the first formal guidelines for public information and participation in relation to protected area management plan review.

These public hearings are to first to be used under the new Protected Area Act, and in support of the Management Planning Regulation of March 2000. Through the use of these guidelines, we are attempting to set a precedent for public information and review of protected area management plans. February and March will see a process that:

- Advertises the role and responsibilities of Park Directorates and their parent institution(s) in the public review process;
- Provides public forums for review and discussion of management plan content at local levels;
- Provides opportunities for special interest groups to comment on the Plans;
- Institutes a process of public information and engagement through the Park Sections, and a program of "open doors";
- Formalizes the public hearing process and develops mechanisms to ensure the public record is noted in an accurate and timely fashion.

Section Heads and Directorate staff from both Parks will be oriented in the steps and tools that will be employed to ensure public opportunities for management plan review prior to the "open doors". Each Park's management staff will be addressed in a separate workshop.

Actions

The last quarterly report referred to several impediments to finalizing management plans in a timely manner. In a December memo from USAID to the Ministry of Environment and Waters, an official proposal/request has been registered to change the date for management plan final approval from December 31, 2000, until May 31, 2001. (**Appendix 2**)

With an appropriate change in deadlines, the Project and both national parks are confident that they will be able to move the management plans through the five, final aspects of its evolution:

1. period of public information and review
2. public hearings
3. official response to the public scrutiny, with changes to the Plans as necessary;
4. submission and review by the Ministry's Committee of Experts
5. Final editorial changes and submission to the Council of Ministers

Work plan implications

Action	Timetable
Orient national park public hearing teams and section heads to public hearing strategy (upon release of NNPS approved management plans)	February 2001
Produce public hearing information materials: inclusive of maps, management plan summaries, and public Q&A leaflets	January and February
Park Open Doors	March
Focus Groups	March
Conduct Public final public hearings	End March
Respond to Public record	April
Submit public record to NNPS and Expert Council	April
Final revision of Plans	May
Submission of Plans to Council of Ministers	End May 2001

CRP 2 Effective Management and Priority Actions of Management Plans Supported

Four specific areas of project and short-term technical assistance were provided in support of this Contract Result Package:

- Draft Biodiversity Conservation Act
- Draft Environmental Protection Act (EPA)
- Finalization of the technical specifications and tender documents for tourism management and tourism infrastructure in Rila and Central Balkans National Parks
- Preliminary needs assessment for further development and training in the use of GIS/GPS in park monitoring and research activities;

Final text was prepared for inclusion in the draft *Biodiversity Conservation Act*, at the request of the Ministry of Environment and Waters. More than 70 specific recommendations were adopted by the Ministry and forwarded to the Parliamentary Commission for consideration. Importantly, these include: (1) changes to the national ecological network that allows areas around national parks to be considered part of this network (buffer zones); (2) clarification on the roles and responsibilities of national park directorates within a regional administrative and planning context; (3) important clarification of the purpose and role of the law relative to other strategic national tools, e.g. the biodiversity conservation strategy, action plan, and EU directives, etc; (4) all new text concerning the necessity to include biodiversity conservation within a strategic national working group that includes the private sector, as well as Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The PMU's contributions were developed by a seven-person expert team, and completed in November. Finalization of these texts was discussed and agreed with NNPS/MOEW in November and December. Proposed revisions and new text were forwarded to the Parliamentary Commission for Environment and Waters in the middle of December. We await the conclusions reached by the National Assembly after the first reading, to determine how many of the new revisions will be incorporated into the revised draft act.

At the request of the Head of the Parliamentary Commission, the BCEG Project was provided with a copy of the draft Environmental Protection Act, for review and comment. The draft EPA represents the country's latest efforts to develop a framework law for all environmental legislation, as well as government policy that affects environmental conservation and sustainable development. This draft law replaces the outdated Environmental Protection Act of 1992, and aims at complying with EU directives. The latter is an effort to comply with basic EU legislative matters as a step toward EU accession.

The draft law was translated into English in December. The BCEG Project submitted a proposal for legislative improvement to the draft, supplied to the Commission during the Law's first reading, on January 18, 2000. An English copy of the BCEG Project comments to the law is attached as **Appendix 3**.

***N.B.** Legislative drafting and policy support is not specifically recognized in the terms of reference/task order for this Project. However, since new legislative initiatives have an immediate and direct impact on Project results, it remains important to retain the flexibility to engage in matters of legislative development that affect project results.*

Significant project assistance for the implementation of park management plans will not take place until management plans are officially approved. This is expected in the second or third quarter of 2001. However, the Project will continue to employ a strategy of working with both national park directorates, to both develop strategies and action plans that provide for swift implementation of management plan activities.

Park Tourism Management and Tourism Infrastructure - Both the design and development of production drawings for tourism infrastructure in both Parks, and preparation of tender documents for regional procurement awards was completed this reporting period. Ironically, the funding approved by the NNPS/MOEW from the National Environmental Protection Fund, was withdrawn at the last moment. GoB contribution to implementation of these contracts is delayed now until FY 2001.

GIS Needs Assessment – The Project retains the technical services of a GIS consultant. Mr. Ivan Kountchev started a needs assessment of park-based GIS and GPS applications and skills development. The needs assessment is specifically related to the development of park-based GIS, its application in park management and monitoring, its role in supporting each park's ecological monitoring program, and the use of GPS units. This needs assessment is expected to result in four major areas to be addressed during park management plan implementation:

- GIS data set corrections and ground-truthing exercises
- Conversion of data supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (that indicates the correct outer boundary definitions of all national parks), into a format that is compatible with the NNPS/National Park GIS platform – AutoCad Land Map.

- Selection of new GIS data sets and development of data parameters
- Development of park-based ecological monitoring program

Two additional issues are expected to be addressed during implementation of park management plans – (1) training in the use of GPS units, and their use in field work during the summers of 2001 and 2002; (2) standardization of park information management, including formats and exchange of information between NNPS and the Directorates.

CRP 5 Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan Prepared

There has been insufficient progress made on the official review and approval of the Management Plan TOR for the newly designated nature park. The TOR was re-drafted and refined during this reporting period, by a three-person, expert team, in an attempt to comply with the working groups' earlier comments. Greater specificity regarding information collection categories was included in the revised TOR. In addition, the management planning implementation process and team sections were both strengthened.

The TOR and technical composition of the core planning team (4 persons) has been developed. A team leader has been selected.

Final review of the working group, and approval of the TOR is expected in February of 2001. This information is according to unofficial reviews and comments on the TOR by Government representatives.

Action	Timetable
TOR Approved by MOEW as tool for management planning	February
Identify and hire Management Plan Core Team	February
Organize and host launch workshop	April
Initiate resource base information collection	March - May
Rapid Ecological and Social Assessment training workshop	May
Rapid Ecological Assessment	June/July
Finalize field work and information analysis	August
First Planning Workshop	September 01

Result 2 Models for generating and capturing biodiversity conservation revenue are improved

This result is supported by two contract results packages:

CRP 3 Park-related eco-enterprises demonstrated for ecotourism and natural, non-timber resources collection

1. Appointment of NNPS representative to this programming area, and the development of pilot area criteria.

Rayna Hardalova has been assigned as the NNPS senior staff member responsible for coordinating all aspects of the Project's assistance for the results package related to eco-enterprise.

2. Appointment of Eco-enterprise specialist to BCEG Project Management Unit.

Kamelia Georgieva, the Project's former Environmental Education and Communication officer, was formally approved by USAID for her new tasks as BCEG Project Eco-enterprise specialist.

3. Launch workshops held

Two launch workshops were held for this results package in December 2000. They were used to assemble two think tanks to review and assess the different options for ecotourism and non-timber resource management models. In addition, they were used to:

- orient key park staff to these two new aspects of park management activities outside the park
- review the criteria for pilot site selection
- share experiences between parks, Bulgarian specialists, and Government representatives who are recognized as experts in aspects of both eco-enterprise activities;
- identify the roles and responsibilities of the National Park Directorates in implementing the pilot eco-enterprise activities;
- help the BCEG Project identify the next steps in launching the pilot projects in both Parks.

The workshop outputs form the basis of two Project concept papers, and action plans, that will be translated and published in February of 2001. Both papers lay out the context, and dimensions of the pilot eco-enterprise activities, and both will contain action plans that guide project activities and expenditures.

4. Strengthen associations with regional and national tourism associations

Contacts were established with the National Tourism Department, and the Deputy Minister of Economy, responsible for tourism. Two representatives attended the BCEG Ecotourism Workshop.

Regional contacts with the Karlovo Tourist Association were established and strengthened with a meeting hosted by Central Balkan National Park Directorate. The meeting was facilitated by the BCEG Project.

The meeting highlighted three important aspects of this pilot site – (1) the political ambitions of a few key municipal players; (2) the absence of any strong terms of reference to guide the activities and decisions of the ad-hoc Association; (3) the poor coordination of the Association with either national programs, or local-based, donor-supported efforts.

With key representatives now appointed by Central Balkan National Park for ecotourism and natural resource collection, the Park Directorate and BCEG Project are poised to start activities in Karlovo Municipality.

There are no key park representatives yet appointed to either activity by Rila National Park. This is expected in February 2001.

Because of both complexity and expected intensity of BCEG Project activities in both these technical areas, we will be reporting on their individual aspects and activities in future. CRP 3 will therefore, be divided into CRP 3a (**non-timber natural resources**), and CRP 3b (**ecotourism**).

CRP 3a Non-timber natural resources

Action	Timetable
Develop roles and responsibilities for national and park-based eco-enterprise working groups	January - March
Complete BCEG Project concept paper and action plan	Feb/March
Develop Scopes of Work for NTNR team of local consultants	February 2001
Orient field project teams	March
Conduct situation analysis at national and pilot levels	March/April
Develop Scope of Work for NTNR consultant (international)	March
Analyze results of situation analysis and develop pilot site implementation plan and budget	May

CRP 3b Ecotourism

Action	Timetable
Develop roles and responsibilities for national and park-based eco-enterprise working groups	January - March
Complete BCEG Project ecotourism concept paper and action plan, inclusive of “conditions of participation”.	Feb/March
Develop SOWs for local ecotourism assistants	Feb/March
Develop SOW for Pr. Don Hawkins – ecotourism consultant GWU	March
Host pilot site launch workshops	Late March
Host Hawkins consultancy and prepare for GWU MA and MBA students	Late April

CRP 4 Mechanism for National Park Financial Sustainability Established

Rayna Hardalova has been appointed by NNPS to the Project Counterpart Team. While eminently qualified in a number of biodiversity conservation disciplines, financing mechanisms is not her strength. The BCEG Project will negotiate with the MOEW and NNPS to replace her with a Ministry staff person dealing with the National Environment Protection Fund (NEPF) and longer-term financial sustainability policy.

The Project continues to view the following financial mechanisms as the focus of our support for this CRP.

1. Private Sector sponsorship of park management activities
2. Development of park marketing and merchandising activities
3. Development of a funding window within the National Environment Protection Fund to help assure dedicated annual funding, and greater transparency in fund allocation to national parks.
4. Formation and development of local NGO foundations in support of park management activities.

Progress for this CRP is related to development of text for the new Environmental Protection Act. Specifically, the Project has proposed text that establishes sub-accounts/funding windows within the NEPF. We have also proposed text for improved management systems and greater accountability and transparency in the application and reporting on the NEPF.

Action	Timetable
Formalize financial mechanisms working group	Jan-March 2001
Develop meeting schedule and agenda for working group	March 2001

The PMU is in direct negotiation with UNDP to ensure that their GEF Enabling Activities focused on financial mechanisms and incentives are closely coordinated with BCEG activities of a similar nature.

Result 3 Greater Public Awareness and Participation is demonstrated in protected area management

This result reflects an over-arching theme in the BCEG Project. Public awareness and information are essential to participation, but more importantly, *informed* participation. Towards this end, public information and awareness are key components of both national and national park –focused efforts. These activities are linked to implementation of each of the other Contract Results Packages.

CRP 6 Public Awareness and Promotion Campaigns Implemented

Svetlana Aladjem was appointed to the PMU as the Project's environmental education and communication specialist, as of January 2001.

Katia Shavuleva is appointed by the MOEW as the counterpart team member responsible for coordination with the Project's national, public awareness campaigns. In addition, she will coordinate national park, public awareness strategies and their implementation and BCEG Project support, with the programs and functions of the MOEW. Katia is the Ministry's press officer.

National and regional public awareness campaigns and events characterized this reporting period. They are the subject of a separate report. The report provides a greater understanding of the dimensions and impacts afforded by a well-coordinated use of mass media and public events. A summary of the national public awareness events is provided in **Appendix 4**.

Activities conducted this period:

1. Finalization of Park-based public awareness and public information strategies and action plans. These form part of each Park's Three-Year Public Information and Education Action Plans.
2. Implementation of the national public awareness campaign on biodiversity conservation and protected areas in Bulgaria. This was supported with the national and international launching of the first popular biodiversity conservation publication – "**The Green Gold of Bulgaria**",
3. Regional public awareness and mass media campaigns launched through both Rila and Central Balkan National Park as part of (1) the national public awareness effort; and (2) public sensitization to the impending release of park management plans for public review and public hearings.
4. Finalization of the Clearing House Mechanism Concept Paper and Scope of Work (attached as **Appendix 5**) for the Phase 1 - "Needs Assessment" related the role and scope of CHMs in Bulgaria. This needs assessment and gap analysis will serve as the focal point of a workshop and Action Planning efforts supported by the REC. REC will then move forward to develop an "NGO" node – Clearing House Mechanism, by supplying equipment, running costs, and project management for a pilot CHM effort. This effort continues to be coordinated with UNDP and its project of support to a Government-pledged CHM, presently identified within the MOEW/NNPS. (As a signatory to both the Convention of Biological Diversity and the Aarhus Convention, Bulgaria is required to establish a CHM with public access.)

Action	Timetable
National and regional Green Gold campaigns – report finalized	February 01
Mass media plan and campaign in support of management plan public hearings	February and March 01
CHM Needs Assessment developed and implemented	Feb/March

4.0 Project Management and Administration

4.1 Project Coordination and Supervision

Four major project coordination and inter-governmental events characterized this reporting period:

1. the BCEG Project Memorandum of Understanding was signed in an official ceremony hosted by the MOEW on November 30, 2000. The MOU was signed by the US Ambassador, Richard Miles, Deputy Prime Minister, P Zhotev, Mission Director, D. McFarland, and Minister Maneva. The event generated significant national mass media coverage.
2. Visit of the Project's CTO from November 27 – December 8, 2000, allowed for detailed discussion and orientation for Mission Director McFarland to BCEG Project supervision issues.
3. Project Steering Committee (Coordination Group) meet to review, revise and approve life of project work plan (December 8, 2000)
4. Appointment of Project Counterpart Team – MOEW/NNPS appoints counterparts in a letter of December, 2000.

4.2 Project Staff

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Peter Hetz – | Senior Resident Advisor and Team Leader |
| 2. Kamelia Georgieva – | Moved to Eco-enterprise specialist; |
| 3. Dimitrina Boteva – | Biodiversity Specialist |
| 4. Svetlana Aladjem – | Environmental Education and Communication Specialist |
| 5. Vessela Gavrailova – | Office Manager and Program Assistant |
| 6. Maria Yourukova – | Financial Manager and Computer Network |
| 7. Krassimir Kostov – | Logistics and Enterprise Development Assistant |

The following events are noted from the reporting period:

Staff Reassignment of Kamelia Georgieva to the position of Eco-enterprise specialist was approved by the USAID-Bulgaria Mission and BCEG CTO in January of 2001. Kamelia will continue to have an active programming role, but will focus on the two new, BCEG Project activities aimed at helping communities around the national parks generate revenue associated with natural resource collection and tourism.

Svetlana Aladjem was added to the PMU technical staff upon approval of her appointment by USAID, in January 2001. She is appointed as Environmental Education and Communications Specialist.

Office Manager and Program Assistant – Vessela Gavrailova, returned to duties upon completion of her maternity leave.

4.3 Office

New international phone and Internet service providers were selected during the reporting period in an effort to reduce office operating costs. These resulted in a change to office email addresses. All email addresses contain the first initial and last name of each PMU staff, at a newly registered domain.

E.g. <Phetz@ardbg.org>

4.4 International Technical Assistance

No international technical assistance was provided during this reporting period.

4.5 National Technical Assistance

- Management Plan authors (*Dr. Dimiattr Peev and Dr. Petar Yankov*) continued with revisions of the National Park Management Plans for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks, based upon final feed-back of the NNPS.
- *Biodiversity Conservation Act Drafting – 7 person team*
- Environmental Education Curriculum Support Materials and their official release at regional public awareness and public information events. The official, national publicity and launching ceremony for these materials is pending.

4.6 Purchase Orders

Were issued in favor of

1. National public awareness campaign on biodiversity conservation and protected areas – launching of the “*Green Gold of Bulgaria*”.
2. Regional/Park-based Public Awareness Campaign materials;

4.7 International Training and Workshop Events

Two international training and workshop events were supported by the Project:

1. *Participation in a course on Business and Ecology organized by the Central European University in Budapest, July 10-21, 2000*

The BCEG Project sponsored, Ganya Ilieva Hristova – Junior Expert at Strategies, Affiliated Programs and Projects Department, of the Ministry of Environment and Waters. Ms. Hristova attended the course simultaneously with PMU staff, Kamelia Georgieva, who was on full scholarship from the CEU for the course. The Project hopes to work with Ms. Hristova on BCEG Project matters related to financial mechanisms and protected area

sustainability. A report is attached as **Appendix 6**. (*This training was not reported last quarterly report, pending translation of the English version of Ms. Hristova's trip report*)

2. *Implication of Land restitution Programs on Achieving WB/WWF Alliance Targets in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region. Brasov, Romania. November 9-10, 2000.*

The Project sponsored two technical experts from the MOEW, – Mr. Mihail Mihailov, Senior expert with the NNPS, and Mr. Lachezar Ivanov, Rila National Park Directorate Forestry Expert. Both experts are dealing with land and forest restitution issues as part of their respective efforts in protected areas and biodiversity conservation. The workshop highlighted two important aspects for Bulgaria – (1) the issue of certification and its importance to private sector forestry, and (2) the necessity for small land/forest holders in Bulgaria to cooperate if forest management, let alone biodiversity conservation is to be addressed successfully. PMU staff member, K. Kostov attended on behalf of the Project, and served as translator for the two Bulgarian participants. Our two Bulgarian colleagues were the guest of workshop hosts, WWF, and the Project covered only travel and per diem costs. A brief report of the workshop (by participants) is attached as **Appendix 7**.

4.8 International Travel

The PMU and Project CTO traveled to Macedonia at the invitation of the Public Enterprise for Physical and Urban Planning (PEPUP), Macedonia. Three Bulgarian PMU staff, the Project's team leader, and CTO were hosted by this planning arm of the Ministry of Environment, Macedonia. The group visited three Category V protected areas, and one proposed new protected area site in the country, escorted by two full-time PEPUP staff. The (December 1- 4) trip was a follow-up to the PMU hosted Sofia, event in October meeting with PEPUP, where PMU staff provided an orientation to the protected area management planning process. A debriefing meeting was held for USAID-Macedonia, and USAID-Bulgaria.

The exchange between the PMU and PEPUP staff is aimed at:

- Furthering the exchange of Bulgarian protected area staff with their Macedonian counterparts;
- Promotion of protected area management planning approaches and methods that are interdisciplinary;
- Encouraging USAID to build upon its protected areas management planning legacy, and support for biodiversity conservation in the Balkans.
- An exchange of biodiversity conservation and protected area management materials that capitalizes on a shared language.

A brief trip report and itinerary are attached as **Appendix 8**.

4.9 Networking and Partnerships

4.9.1 BSBCP - Swiss Program – there are no new developments to report on the evolution of Phase 3 of the BSBCP program. Negotiations between the Swiss and the Bulgarian Government are still underway to select project sites for their next phase. It is believed that the next phase of the Project will address the geographical areas of the Ropotamo and

Strandja areas, the Black Sea Wetland areas, particularly around Bourgas, and the Rhodopes. It is unclear how the Swiss program will proceed with both the Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds, and the UNDP GEF Rhodopes Biodiversity Conservation Project.

A meeting between the BCEG Project Team Leader, the Project CTO, and Rossen Vassielev, BSBCP Project Coordinator, shed light on the intended level of support intended by the Swiss program to Central Balkan National Park. The meeting indicates that BSBCP will continue to phase out of the Central Balkan National Park. It is only their intention to retain small support for the Karlovo Tourist Center, and the Friends of the Park Newsletter. They do not envision additional programmatic support for management plan implementation.

4.9.2 UNDP - discussions continue between the UNDP Project Concept Development Team for the Rhodopes GEF Biodiversity Conservation Project and the BCEG Project. UNDP continues to seek an indication of parallel funding support from USAID/BCEG Project to the Concept for the Rhodopes Conservation Project. – specifically, they seek an indication from USAID that funding support for BCEG activities can be construed as parallel funding support for aspects of the GEF Rhodopes project. The concept paper and project preparation funding request is expected to go the UNDP/GEF review team in April.

The Project also continues is coordination with UNDP on activities related to the development of Clearing House Mechanism(s) in Bulgaria. UNDP has indicated that funds are being released in January as part of their national enabling program. UNDP will support an international and local consultant to conduct a capacity building needs assessment for a national, governmental CMH within the Ministry of Environment and Waters, NNPS. This activity is expected to draw heavily of the Phase 1 CHM Needs Assessment conducted on behalf of the BCEG Project. An April workshop should help to galvanize both the role and functions of CHMs scheduled to be set up by the Government and REC for the NGO community.

4.9.3 PC-3 Telecenter Project - The Project and USAID Program Assistants met with the AED/USAID Public Computer and Communications Center (PC3) Project representative for two reasons:

- Update each other on our respective efforts in public information access and sharing related to possible enterprise development;
- Encourage the PC3 Project to examine proposals coming from National Park target municipalities and developed in response to the Project's RFP that was released in January.

The BCEG Project has promoted the PC3 concept to national parks, and to select Peace Corps Volunteers operating in target municipalities surrounding the Park. The aim is to encourage the development of private sector Internet providers to under-subscribed municipalities. It is hoped the initiative will have spin-offs that benefit national park and municipal relationships, and conservation education and eco-enterprise activities.

APPENDICES

ARD-Bulgaria
**Biodiversity Conservation &
Economic Growth
Project**

*Sponsored by
USAID & Government of Bulgaria*

**Guidelines
for
Public Information & Participation
leading to Public Hearings for
National Park Management Plans**

Purpose

These guidelines are meant to steer a set of activities carried out in support of public information, scrutiny and participation leading to the approval of 10 year management plans for two, national parks in Bulgaria – Rila and Central Balkan National Parks.

These activities are suggested in addition to any public involvement secured as part of the development of the management plans. These guidelines provide a set of discrete opportunities for the Bulgarian public to review and comment on plans that will serve as tools for guiding national park management actions (exclusive state property) on behalf of the public, for a decade.

These guidelines provide a set of responsibilities and activities to be undertaken by the management planning contractors, the national park directorates and their regional park sections, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Waters/National Nature Protection Service, at national level.

Context

These guidelines are developed in response to the legal requirement for public hearings for elaboration and adoption of management plans established in the Protected Areas Act of 1998. These guidelines further interpret both the Rules on the Organization and Activities of the National Park Directorates, as well as the Regulation on Protected Area Management Planning.

The legal requirements for the role of the Directorates in elaboration of the management plan, and the procedure for public hearings, is explicit in the following excerpts from regulations governing the Protected Areas Act:

Rules on the Organization and the Activities of the National Park Directorates approved by the Minister of Environment and Waters.

Article 4. The Directorates shall:

1. Participate in the elaboration of the management plans (MP), and development of technical plans and projects by:

- >drafting and depositing to the MOEW proposals for financing of plans and projects;
- >commissioning the elaboration of technical projects for maintenance and restorative activities provided for in the MP and in the development plans;
- >providing the available information required for the elaboration of the plans and projects;
- >preparing statements on the plans and projects and participating in the process of their adoption.

Decree No. 7 of February 8, 2000, Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, Regulation on Protected Area Management Planning.

Article 12. (1) Subject to mandatory public hearing shall be projects and plans for the management of national and nature parks and of maintained reserves.

Article 13. The public hearings under Article 12, paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be organized by the Contractors who shall:

1. Make announcements in one central newspaper and in local mass media, at least 20 days in advance, of the date, the time, the location and the subject of the public hearing as well as the location where the draft is available for those interested;
2. Place announcements with the data under paragraph 1 in prominent places in the respective municipalities in the same period;
3. Notify in writing the interested central authorities, scientific and academic institutions of the circumstances under paragraph 1 in the same period.

Article 14. (1) The contractors shall:

1. Present to the public hearing the draft management plans and shall keep minutes of the opinions, comments and recommendations;
2. Record in the draft the expedient comments and recommendations;
3. Draw up a document informing about motivations concerning comments and recommendations not accounted for, and shall notify the relevant persons thereof within a month after the public hearing;
4. Attach to the draft the minutes of the public hearing and the information about the comments not accounted for;
5. Send copies of the minutes and of the information document to the Ministry of Environment and Waters, within one month of the public hearing.

N.B. The persons under Article 14, paragraph 1, item 3 may make a written objection to the Minister of Environment and Waters who shall, within one month, make a final pronouncement regarding the expediency of the comments not accounted for and shall notify thereof the relevant persons and the customer, and the contractor, respectively. The contractor shall take into consideration the opinion of the Ministry of Environment and Waters.

Although both Rila and Central Balkan National Parks have existed for almost 10 years, this is the first time that 10-year plans have been developed for their management. These new management plans are the first to follow the tenets of modern biodiversity conservation and nature conservation principles. And while several other management plans have been elaborated for other protected areas in the country, this is the first set of management plans to be developed in the context of modern Bulgarian protected area and biodiversity conservation legislation.

Experience with public participation in the elaboration of management plans is very limited. Experience with public hearings in relation to environmental legislation is only slightly more developed. There have been earlier efforts to engage the public in the review of the Protected Areas Act, the national park boundaries, and the implementation of EIA procedures. These earlier experiences contribute to a growing ethos about the role and responsibility of government institutions in interpreting policy for the public. Public hearings also illustrate the public right to information that leads to informed participation in decision making and implementation of management policy.

These guidelines reflect a set of lessons learned from previous public hearing events. They illustrate a set of formal activities conducted for the public and interested parties in advance of the public hearing event. They identify a set of responsibilities of the management planning contractor, as well as the National Park Directorates to both (1) inform the public about policy interpretation and national park management expectation for future public relationships, (2) to receive feed-back concerning park management objectives, activities, and functions. These guidelines are aimed at complementing a set of positive partnerships and relationships that have been developed between the new national park directorates and the municipalities that surround them.

Strategy

The law requires a minimum of 20 days between the announcement and event of a public hearing for protected area management plans. In addition, it requires the management planning agency, institution, or contractor to make available copies of the management plan final draft, at locations clearly designated for public access.

These guidelines employ a more strategic set of activities in advance of public hearings. This strategy promotes a more ambitious program of public information on the management plan, as well as more regular access to the institution responsible for eventual management plan implementation. As a consequence, there are four major aspects to this set of public information and participation activities prior to a public hearing event:

1. Orientation and preparation of National Park staff for their direct participation in the public information-sharing specific to the management plans.
2. Development of a set of written materials (management plan synopses) on key management themes.

3. A program of “open doors” – a publicly announced period of public access to personnel, written information and maps each national park. National Park staff, management plan authors, and park experts will facilitate these. Open doors are hosted at all Park Section offices, at the Directorates, and in the nation’s capital;
4. A series of “focal group” information and discussions addressing key park management topics and themes – specifically, natural resource collection from within national parks, and tourism development and management;

Principles

1. This public hearing process is premised on clarity and transparency regarding the management intentions of the National Park Directorate. The principles governing management proposals in the park, rights/access for sustainable use of resources in the park, and the obligations of the Park Directorate for enforcing the policy of the state, will be clearly explained.
2. The public hearings will be conducted in a positive manner, reinforcing the public's right to information. Restrictions on public activities as well as public opportunities will be explained in parallel. Public information will illustrate opportunities for participatory implementation of park management activities. Parks will also identify opportunities for participation of special interest groups in the direct management of protected areas based on shared benefits and shared responsibilities – this ranges from fire suppression and management, to natural resource collection, to tourism development, to natural resource monitoring and research, etc. The clear explanation of these principles is important for building public support for the management plan and future management activities.
3. Public information and access, as well as the conduct of focal group discussions are provided in a manner that provides for feedback and reaction regarding management objectives, norms and regimes. Public scrutiny should help both the contractor and the Park Directorates to gauge both public and stakeholder support for planned, management actions.
4. This process attempts to establish a model for public information, participation and public hearings that can be replicated for other protected area management planning efforts. Therefore, efforts will be aimed at realistic costs, cost efficiency. Results of all phases of the public hearing process will be analyzed in an effort to encourage improvements and future applications. These will be reported.

Proposed Steps in Securing Public Participation and Review

I. Create a general positive attitude and atmosphere.

Public awareness campaigns in advance of a focused set of management planning review activities are important. Towards this end, a public awareness campaign revisited the important general themes of national parks, biodiversity conservation, the international significance of the park natural resources, associated benefits from national parks, etc. This was most recently

achieved through both a national and regional campaigns launching the publication – “*The Green Gold of Bulgaria*” - the first national, popular publication aimed at these themes. These campaigns lasted two and half months, and were focused on Sofia, and the municipalities surrounding Rila and Central Balkan National Parks. They included extensive national and regional mass media coverage, and a set of specific celebratory events within each Municipality hosting a park section office.

II. Preparation of Public Information Materials

Several types of public information materials will be prepared. Some materials are prepared in response to an analysis of management plan topics and themes. These were gathered during management plan preparation.

1. **Park Management Plans** – Sufficient copies will be produced to have one copy available in each park HQ, each park section office, and in NNPS in Sofia. *(10 copies for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks, and 3 copies for NNPS, and 3 copies for BCEG Project)*
2. **Park Management Plan Summaries** – These are management plan synopses. The purpose of this summary is to present exceptional park resources; park significance; park management objectives; the proposed management zones, regimes, and norms; and finally, the specific management intentions. The programs and the projects are presented in summary form, with budget estimates only. The summary of the management plan is presented to municipalities, institutions and organizations that are expected to make official statements regarding the management plan. It is the primary materials for public information and presentation. *(200 pieces will be produced for each Park)*
3. **Question and Answer leaflets** – These are most specifically aimed at the general public, in particular those people living around the national parks. Each leaflet addresses a specific management theme. They are written simply, and aimed at answering most frequently asked questions. These were used to good effect during the public discussion on national park boundaries, conducted in 1999.

We will produce at least two leaflets – one on natural resource collection from within parks, and the other on tourism, tourism development, and tourism management inside and outside the parks. Each leaflet will contain a general introduction to the national park, and will be related to park-specific areas and landmarks.

These leaflets will be prepared by the Contractor’s team, and finalized with the Park Directorate. *(300 copies of each leaflet will be developed on each theme. Final content and print run will be decided upon during the meetings for orientation and preparation with the park directorates and with the heads of sections.)*

4. **Maps** - *Three (3) sets* of 1:50,000/55,000 scale maps will be secured for each Park. One set will be used to illustrate park boundaries, zones, and topography by Park section. The other set will be used to illustrate the entire park for public hearings. They will be laminated for purposes of durability and cleanliness. Each Park Section office will be able to illustrate the general park zone scheme, as well as its relation to the park section.
5. **Posters** – Posters will be designed and printed to notifying the public about public information and participation events. These will be posted in all major population areas surrounding

the Park. They will use a common design, and illustrate the schedule of public events, and timetables leading up to public hearings. (*200 pieces will be produced for each park and 50 for Sofia*).

6. **Park Promotional Materials** – these materials will be available in limited quantities at each public event, but will not be produced specifically by the contractor, or by each park. Quantities will be based on existing inventory of these materials at each Park

III. Develop Public Announcement and Mass Media Program

The public announcement and mass media program is developed by the contractor in conjunction with the public information and relations specialists from each park. Together with the contractor, they will coordinate development of a regional and national mass media orientation to the public events, as well as advertise the public hearing. They will also prepare a joint strategy for working with and responding to the mass media during the period of public engagements.

IV. Staff Preparation and Orientation Workshops

One workshop will be conducted for each Park. It will be organized and facilitated by the Contractor and management plan authors. Each workshop will last for 3 days. Specialists from the park directorates, the heads of park sections are participants. The workshop has five aims:

- Orient park staff to the use of management plans, and supporting park management zone maps;
- Orient staff to the set up and conduct of open doors,
- Finalize the content of public information materials;
- Elaborate a plan of action for engaging local town representatives, park management participation in focus group forums, and in Sofia open doors.
- Elaborate the schedule and responsibilities for MOEW staff (national and directorate staff) at the public hearing.

V. Park “Open Doors”

“Open doors” afford public access to Park section personnel and management plan related documentation the location and time of these open doors will be specified in the public announcements using national and regional mass media, as well as posters. Park Section office “doors” will be open for a period of 10 days, during which time a park representative will be present, a guest book will be maintained, and questions can be answered. Member of the public may choose this time to submit written statements that will be read during the public hearing.

Guest books will record the names and institutions of the visitors. Questions that require an answer outside the capacity of the Park section to answer, or need clarification, will be recorded and transferred to the Directorate Headquarters as necessary. These questions and/or opinions do not form part of the official public record. Instead, they are meant to inform Senior Park management about issues and concerns that are raised, and require an information.

Park Directorate Headquarters will also maintain a program of “open doors”. These will be conducted in parallel to the Section Head offices, and last for at least a period of two weeks. Information and staff will be on hand to respond to public demand and interest. In all cases, copies of the full management plan will be accessible for public review. As for Section Offices, the timetable and schedule for “open doors” at headquarters will be advertised.

The management plan authors/contractor will circulate to each park section “open doors”, to allow attendance during at least one session. Specialists will join them to the degree possible from the National Park Directorate.

VI. Sofia Open Doors

“Open Doors” will also be maintained for a one-week period in Sofia. Open doors will be operated and maintained by the management plan contractor. Both Park management plans will be accessible simultaneously. A guest book will be maintained. Information will be provided by the management plan authors. Both National Park Directors and key specialists will attend during specific times during the week. At least one day will be devoted to presentation and discussions on only one park. This will allow for more focused discussion and public scrutiny.

A facility will be selected with a central location and easy public access. All public information materials available to the Park offices will also be available here. Displays will include management zone and administrative zone maps for both parks.

VII. Focus Group Presentations and Discussions

Focus groups will be organized by the Contractor, in collaboration with the Park Directorates. Each focal group session will focus on a pre-determined park management topic. These will be announced in advance, forming part of the public announcement and mass media program.

Focus groups sessions have a dual purpose – clarification on specific issues and management positions, and important feedback on management objectives and approaches

Focus groups are hosted by the National Park, conducted by the contractor, and employ a professional facilitator. Minutes will be kept, but are not allowed by law to form a part of the public record. Rather, focus groups will be used to inform park management teams of important follow-up topics during management plan implementation.

Each focus group discussion will be held in a key municipality around each Park. Four focus groups discussions are envisioned in advance of the public hearing – two each for Central Balkan National Park, and Rila National Park. Municipal locations are selected based on the proposed role they will have in the preliminary stages of management plan implementation.

VIII Public Hearings

Public hearings will be conducted in the municipality that hosts the National Park Directorate Headquarters. There will be one public hearing for Central Balkan National Park Management Plan in Gabrovo, and one public hearing for Rila National Park Management Plan, in Blagoevgrad.

The role of the National Park Directorate. The National Park Directorate is the **host** of the public hearing. The Director will open the hearing, and introduce the Contractor’s team and the rea-

sons for the holding of the public hearing. During the hearing, representatives of the Directorate will answer questions related plan implementation (annual action plans), the management plan implementation procedures and the possibilities for participation in the park management activities.

All questions related to the Park's regimes, norms or specific regulatory activities, or to the administration of the park, will also be answered by representatives of the Park Directorate.

The role of the Ministry of Environment and Waters. The MOEW/NNPS will have both a supervisory role, as well as a facilitation role in the public hearing. They will:

- Explain the procedure that will be observed during the public hearing;
- Moderate discussion, questions and answers as necessary;
- Answer matters requiring clarification and elaboration regarding relevant laws and/or regulations;

The Contractor's role – Overall organization of the event will be undertaken by the Contractor's team. The contractor will ensure the necessary arrangement are made for a public hall, associated amenities, and the necessary recording equipment/services. The management plan will be presented at the meeting by the Contractor, as required in the Regulation. The Management Plan authors will answers questions raised by the presentation, and by the public. The representatives of the team will answer questions aimed at clarification of management plan contents.

The Contractor's team will provide minutes of the event. They are required by law to:

- Make amendments to the management plan, as appropriate;
- Respond in writing within one month of the public hearing, to proposals that are rejected, with supporting rationale;

Within one month of the public hearing, the Contractor will submit to the Ministry of Environment and Waters, a final draft management plan that accommodates the results of the public hearing. In addition, the Contractor will also supply a list of proposals to the Plan that were rejected, with brief explanations.

Appendix 2

ARD-Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project

January 18, 2001

Comments and Observations on the Draft Environmental Protection Act of December 2000

Clearly, this law is designed to serve as the overarching, legislative framework on protecting the environment in Bulgaria. As such, the present draft represents an ambitious undertaking. Our general observations are that its contents are largely in compliance with issues of EU environmental accession principles. The draft conveys the Republic's general commitment to protecting the environment.

General Observations:

It would be helpful to cite appropriate legislation/strategies/sector programs more specifically. Where appropriate, cite the specific names of legislation and the dates when it became effective/amended.

Clearly, many elements of this legislation require clarifying orders and regulations for effective enforcement. Timetables for the development of these orders is not consistent or clear.

Our area of specialization and programmatic interests suggest that we focus specifically on 4 elements of the draft Legislation:

1. Organization of the Funding Mechanisms for Environmental Protection Activities
2. Role and responsibilities of the National Park Directorates regarding this legislation, as well as their coordination with Ministry and non-Ministry authorities outside the mandates of the national park territory.
3. Information and Information Access Related to the Environment
4. Use and Conservation of Biodiversity

1. Organization of the Funding Mechanisms for Environmental Protection Activities

General Comments:

This chapter would benefit from:

- (1) A strengthening of text regarding the purpose of the NEPF, and its location at the beginning of the Chapter.
- (2) More specific opportunities for sub-accounts or funding windows described within the NEPF, to allow for donor earmarking of funds. These may be linked to sectoral programs within the Ministry, and part of the National Development Plan. For example it would be beneficial to have sub-accounts addressing air quality, water quality, waste management, nature protection, etc;
- (3) Greater accountability and reporting on the fund's operations, management, revenue generation and accounting than is provided for in the draft legislation.

- (4) A similar strengthening of text in support of the role and accountability of environmental protection funds operated at the Municipal level.
- (5) Make provisions for National Park Directorates to become engaged at the level of Board of Directors, with Municipal Environmental Protection Funds, in municipalities surrounding the National Parks.

II. Chapter 3, Section 5 Use and Conservation of Biodiversity

Article 54 is particularly weak in the context of all the work that has been done by the Ministry in favor of the Biodiversity Conservation Act. We would recommend a strengthening of this article to include:

- (1) Biological diversity conservation in the country shall be the subject of a special strategy and laws that recognize a hierarchy of biological diversity conservation within a system of protected areas, the development and support of a national ecological network, and conservation of specific species in areas falling outside both of these areas/networks.

Other articles would be strengthened by rewriting:

Article 55 Wild, as well as indigenous plant and animal species, shall be managed in a sustainable manner, with particular emphasis placed on ensuring the viability of populations in their natural environment.

Article 56 Biological diversity and its conservation shall be the subject of specific multi-year management plans showing a preference for in-situ conservation. Biological diversity conservation will be addressed as part of either a protected area or as part of the national ecological network. Habitat and species conservation activities within these areas, will in addition, be governed by the appropriate international directives and conventions to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a signatory. Reference will be given to renewable natural resources and their sustainable management, as appropriate. These efforts shall be the subject of relevant special legislation.

Any species conservation or renewable resources management effort not covered by the appropriate plan will be the subject of a specific species or renewable resource conservation and management plan. These are also the subject of relevant special legislation.

Renewable resource extraction and/or use in state owned and municipal lands shall be subject to conservation and management plans. In addition, they shall be subject to the payment of fees and/or concessions as determined in the relevant special law and supporting orders. This is particularly important in the case of water originating in national park watersheds.

III. The Role and Mandate of National Park Directorates

We note positively that the role and mandate of the National Park Directorates is identified and acknowledged in this draft law. While the number, scope, activities, and powers of the MOEW's representatives will be determined by "rules" issued by the Minister of MOEW, we submit that it would be helpful to have the roles and mandates of National Park Directorates more clearly understood in the legislation. In particular, we note the need to better describe working relationships with other MOEW representatives at RIEW levels, Basin Directorates, and with Municipalities contiguous with national parks.

We believe the following are worth noting and adding the draft for sake of clarity:

Article 12 (2) In areas/municipalities outside of national parks, and that address issues affecting national parks, the National Park Directorates will be considered the primary representative of the MOEW. They shall be deemed competent to undertake the activities and actions required by law, and will liaise with the appropriate RIEWs Basin Directorates, and Municipalities.

Article 15 (2) We recommend the establishment of expert ecological councils in support of national park directorates.

Article 22 (1) We believe that National Parks should have the right to reject public requests for information that could be seen as jeopardizing the viability of rare or endangered plant and animal populations and their localities /

Article 65 (2) We submit that the Board of Directors for municipalities and MEPFs that border the national parks should include a representative of the National Park Directorate.

Chapter II Information on the State of the Environment

This section begins to positively identify the intent of the legislation to follow both articles of the Aarhus Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity. We believe the following elements lend further clarity to the draft:

Article 19 (1) Include specifically information related to biological diversity, endangered and threatened species and habitats, protected area network and national ecological network status reports;

In addition – we would recommend adding a final paragraph indicating that the:

Information parameters, standard formats and frequency of reports on elements of the environment noted in paragraph 1, will be the subject of an order of the Ministry of Environment and Waters, within the first year of the passage of this Law.

Chapter 4 refers

We believe that this Chapter would be strengthened by greater specificity.

1. The purpose of the Fund should be moved from an obscure position within Article 66, point number (2). It would be better to include the following description of the purpose of the fund within Article 63, as a separate paragraph.

Additional text proposed for Article 63 –

A National Environmental Protection Fund (NEPF) and Municipal Environmental Protection Fund (MEPF) shall be established at the Ministry of Environment and Waters, and at the municipalities, respectively.

The purpose of the National Environmental Protection Fund shall be to support environmental projects and activities prioritized in accordance with the following national strategies. Priorities are describe and agreed as part of the multi-year planning process:

National Environment Strategy (NES)
National Biological Diversity Strategy and Plan
Others??

Article 64 – Proposed Text

- (1) The management and organization the NEPF shall be conducted by the Board of Directors, chaired by the Ministry of Environment and Waters.
- (2) The Board of Directors of the NEPF shall consist of 13 members, including a Deputy Minister of MOEW who shall be Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors. Other members will be included by virtue of their title/position and include: etc.....
Included within these 13 members will be the Deputy Chairman of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and National Executive Officer of an environmental NGO with broad, national subscription, and not registered as a political party, and whose scope of activities attempts to span environmental issues in an integrated manner.
- (3) The Minister of the MOEW shall select the appropriate Non-Governmental Organization.
- (4) The Board of Directors shall develop a set of rules and regulations governing the operations and functions of the Board, as well as the Fund. This will be reviewed and approved by the Council of Ministers in an order.
- (5) The Board of Directors shall be assisted by a secretariat of the Ministry of Environment and Waters.
- (6) The Organization of the National Environmental Protection Fund shall include the ability to earmark or designate funds for specific components receiving funding within the general NEPF. Sub-accounts or funding windows shall be established to allow for easier allocation of funds to elements/government units identified as priorities within each of the multi-year strategy and are prepared to receive and use the funding effectively.
Sub-accounts will also be designated for ease of commercial, private sector and international donor contributions and their subsequent accountability for priority elements of each multi-year strategy or plan, on an annual basis.
- (7) The Board of Directors shall report on its proceedings, income and expenditures, As a matter of the public record, on an annual basis.

Article 65

Section 1. The Municipal Environmental Protection Fund is designated to support the priority activities contributing to improved environmental management within the Municipality. These priority activities will be described within a Municipal Environmental Program.

Section 2 The Municipal Environmental Protection Fund shall be managed by a Board of Directors, chaired by the Mayor of the municipality.

New Section 3. The Board of Directors of the Municipal Environmental Protection Funds (MEPF) shall consist of at least 5 members, including by rights:

- one representative of the regional inspectorate of the Ministry of Environment and Waters (in the case of municipalities considered part of each of the National Park's catchment area, the Board will also include a representative of the National Park Directorate)
- the hygiene and epidemiological inspectorate,
- a member of the river basin authority, as appropriate;
- a member of the municipal council
- a local representative (as appropriate) of an environmental citizen's group/NGO;

Additional members of the Board of Directors of the MEPF, shall be determined by the Municipal Council. Bylaws and guidelines governing the organization, functions, and operations of the MEPF, as well as the appointment of a secretariat, shall be developed by the Board. These will be registered as member of the public record within 90 days of the appointment of each Board. Annual reports regarding income, expenditure, Board Decisions will be published as a matter of the public record on an annual basis.

New Section 4 – The preparation and carrying out of the meetings of the Board of Directors, and the control and implementation of its decisions, shall be carried out by persons and/or administrative units in the municipality appointed by order of the Mayor. Both the decision of the Board, and the order of the Mayor shall be a matter of the public record in the municipality.

Article 66

Section 1 no changes

Section 2 delete, as moved to Article 63

Section 3 The NEPF monies can be expended as grants, interest-free loans, and soft loans with the terms and conditions governing each expenditure clearly specified and as a matter of the public record.

Article 67

Section 1 no changes

Section 2 the funds of the MEPF shall be expended as grants AND LOANS, for environmental project and activities prioritized within Municipal Environmental Programs. These programs, their funding, and their status shall be the subject of an annual report, and as a matter of the public record.

Article 68

See Article 64, section (4).

We are prepared to add further detailed text on these four motions, if desired by the Parliamentary Commission.

Campaign for Media Coverage

Of

The launching of the publication
“Green Gold of Bulgaria”
28 November 2000

And

The signing of the
Memorandum of Understanding
between the Governments of the Republic of Bulgaria and the United States of America,
formalizing financial and technical support to biodiversity conservation and economic
growth efforts in Bulgaria, on
30 November 2000

Consulting Mass Media and PR expert
Svetlana Aladjem
December 8, 2000

A report for the

ARD-Bulgaria
Biodiversity Conservation &
Economic Growth
Project

Sponsored by
USAID & Government of Bulgaria

Analysis of the Results of the Campaign for Mass Media Coverage

Covering the two events

- launching and public promotion of the *Green Gold of Bulgaria* publication on 28 November 2000; and,
- the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding* between the Governments of the Republic of Bulgaria and the United States of America on 30 November 2000

This report forms part of the national, public awareness activities of the USAID-sponsored Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project.

There are five stages to this campaign:

1. Preparation of messages and orientation of printed and electronic media specialists prior to the event.
2. National level launching of the popular publication on biodiversity conservation efforts in Bulgaria – *the Green Gold of Bulgaria*
3. Signing of the MOU between the Governments of Bulgaria and the USA for financial and technical support to protected areas planning and management, biodiversity conservation, and economic growth;
4. National level and international distribution of the book – *“Green Gold”* - to national NGOs, Ministries, Parliament, international diplomatic missions of Bulgaria throughout the world, .
5. Regional promotion and distribution of the book through the National Park directorates of the Central Balkan and Rila National Parks.

The three stages of the campaign were **completed successfully with more than 20 newspaper publications, 40 TV appearances and radio broadcasts with more than two total hours of coverage officially registered.**

Preliminary evaluation of the success of the mass media campaign are based on:

- ***The context of the media coverage.*** The campaign was carried out against a particularly competitive set of newsworthy events – (1) Bulgaria’s efforts to be removed from the list of European countries requiring visas for movement within Europe, and (2) and the licensing of the second GSM operator in the country. The Ministry of Environment and Waters itself, also had other important activities on the same dates. These included the joint press conference of the Minister Maneva and

the deputy secretary general of the General Environmental Directorate of the European Commission J. F. Verstringe, on 28 November, 11 a.m. It also included the signing of an inter-ministerial agreement between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Labor

- Mass media consistently broke the “unspoken rule” of not mentioning the Minister or Ministry’s name more than once in a 24-hour period. Extensive coverage was registered for both the book launch and the MOU signing, against competing stories.
- Book launch coverage, and MOE information appeared in the prime time news of the almost all central TV and Radio Stations. Bulgarian National TV’s prime time news program, “*Po sveta I u nas*”, for example, had three pieces of news about environmental issues, and still included a report from the book launch.
- One of the best achievements of the campaign is that *all the publications reflect accurate information. We attribute this to the amount of time spent orienting and familiarity journalists with subject-matter materials. The mass media representatives were contacted frequently and consistently with appropriate information.*
- “Message ” development was *clear and positive. Messages were sent at the right time to the right people.* The politicians and experts who were interviewed were oriented, competent and gave very good performances
- A variety of speakers with *different faces, voices and names* appeared in the public space with the right messages, making *the campaign persuasive and strong.*
- Films from the Project supported video library kept provided strong and appropriate background to interviews and reports. They helped to popularize the beauty of the Bulgarian nature.
- An analysis of public mass media coverage in the Project archives (since 1995) indicates that *the publications covering the book launch and the MOU signing are fifteen times greater than all similar newspaper coverage for any weekly period over the last five years.*
- A quick analysis of prices for paid advertisement in *the central newspapers shows that even the smallest text of only two square centimeters in “24 hours” or “Trud” – the most popular dailies would cost 52 U.S. dollars. 30 seconds in the morning show of the “Horizon” program of the Bulgarian National Radio, would cost 60 U.S. dollars.*
- Particular attention was given to ensuring wide coverage by TV and Radio. (1) *TVs and Radio Stations have much bigger audience than the printed media. Messages spread more quickly and more widely in this media, than in print.* (2) *Many media experts believe that prevailing high prices of daily newspapers discourage buyers. They don’t reach a*

broad spectrum of society. Interviews and reports on the National TV, and all the programs of the National radio are the most significant to this campaign – they represent significant coverage, a large audience and ensure wide national audience.

Mass Media Coverage for this campaign was provided by all the major newspaper, television stations and radio stations. **This table illustrates the circulation of the top nine national newspapers, and the most popular TV's and Radio's audience.** The book launch and the MOU signing were covered by more than 45 publications, with two hours of TV and Radio.

Newspaper	Daily Circulation (October 2000)	% of population
Sedmichen Trud (weekly)	350 000 on Friday	
Trud (daily)	330 000/480 000 on Saturday	42.93
24 hours (daily)	180 000/280 000 on Saturday	24.22
Sega (daily)	26 000	4.80
Standart (daily)	23 000/35 000 on Friday	2.16
Demokratcia (daily)	18 000	2.40
Zemia (daily)	18 000	1.92
Duma (daily)	17 000	3.36
Kesh (weekly)	12 000	

Monthly Audience of the TV channels:

Bulgarian National TV	83.20
BTV	59.80
Nova TV	21.50
Evrokom	12.20
7 days	8.00
Cable TV	3.40
Channel 3	2.60

Monthly Audience of the Radio Stations:

Horizont (Bulgaria. National Radio)	46.30
Darik	10.50
Vesselina	10.10
FM+	5.70
Hristo Botev (Bulgarian National Radio)	4.70
Express	3.00
Vitosha	2.30
Viva	2.00

TV Appearances and Radio Broadcasts *

Media Orientation Meeting Results

Time and Date	TV Appearance / Radio Broadcast	Duration
23 November 2:50 p.m.	Report from the orientation meeting for journalist Radio Bulgaria (broadcasting for abroad)	8 minutes
23 November 9:20 a.m.	Interview with Kamelia Georgieva in "Predi vsichki" of "Horizont" programme /Bulgarian National Radio-BNR/	10 minutes
23 November 3:10 p.m.	Interview with Plamen Valcev, author of the People and National Parks publication in "Sled obeda" of "Horizont" program /BNR/	5 minutes

Launch of the Green Gold

Time and Date	TV Appearance / Radio Broadcast	Duration
28 November 8:10 a.m.	Interview with Hristo Bojinov, Director of the National Nature Protection Service /NNPS/ in the morning show of "Hristo Botev" program of the BNR	8 minutes
28 November 7:40 a.m.	Interview with Michail Michailov, governmental expert in the NNPS, in the morning show of the BTV	15 minutes
28 November 9:10 a.m.	Interview with Peter Hetz and Kamelia Georgieva with a background of films for Rila and Central Balkan in the Morning Show of the Bulgarian National Television /BNTV/ - Channel 1	12 minutes
28 November 8:20 a.m.	Interview with Svetlana Aladjem, the compiler and editor of the Green Gold of Bulgaria in "Predi vsichki" of "Horizont" program /BNR/	10 minutes
28 November 2:00 p.m.	Information about the launch in the news of "Horizont" program /BNR	40 seconds
28 November 2:00 p.m.	Information about the launch in the news of "Darik" Radio	50 seconds
28 November 2:00 p.m.	Information about the launch in the news of "Express" Radio	40 seconds
28 November 3:00 p.m.	Information about the launch in the news of "Vitosha" Radio	40 seconds
28 November 3:30 p.m.	Information about the launch in the afternoon's show of "FM+" Radio	25 seconds
28 November 5:30 p.m.	Report + interview with minister Maneva in the main news of "Skat" cable TV	2 minutes

Time and Date	TV Appearance / Radio Broadcast	Duration
28 November 8:23 p.m.	Report from the launch in "Po sveta I u nas" (prime time news) of Channel 1, BNTV	1,5 minutes
28 November 6:00 p.m.	Report from the launch in the main news of "Demo" cable TV	2 minutes
28 November 6:00 p.m.	Report from the launch in the main news of "Verea" cable TV	2 minutes
28 November 7:30 p.m.	Information in the main news of "Nova TV"	40 seconds
28 November 7:30 p.m.	Information in the main news of "bTV"	50 seconds
29 November 6:30 p.m.	Interview with Peter Hetz on Alma Mater (student's radio)	12 minutes

Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding

Time and Date	TV Appearance / Radio Broadcast	Duration
30 November 7:40 a.m.	Information about the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the early morning show of the BNTV "Business Breakfast"	1,5 minutes
30 November 8:38 a.m.	Information about the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the morning show of "Hristo Botev" program of the BNR	1,30 minutes
30 November 11:20 a.m.	Interview with Peter Hetz in "Predi obed" of "Horizont" program /BNR/	12 minutes
30 November 10:15 p.m.	Interview with Debra McFarland in "Ekip 4" of BNTV	10 minutes
30 November 4:00 p.m.	Information about the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the news of "Horizont" program /BNR/	50 seconds
30 November 4:00 p.m.	Information about the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the news of "Darik" Radio	50 seconds
30 November 3:00 p.m.	Information about the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the news of "Vitosha" Radio	50 seconds
28 November 4:43 p.m.	Reportage about the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Radio Bulgaria (broadcasting for abroad)	50 seconds
30 November 5:30 p.m.	Interview with Alicia Graims in the main news of "Skat" cable TV	2 minutes

Time and Date	TV Appearance / Radio Broadcast	Duration
30 November 5:30 p.m.	Report from the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding + interview with minister Maneva in the main news of "Demo" cable TV	2 minutes
30 November 8:17 p.m.	Reportage from the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in "Po sveta I u nas" (primetime news) of Channel 1, BNTV	1,5 minutes
30 November 6:30 p.m.	Reportage from the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the main news of "Den" cable TV	2 minutes
30 November 7:00 p.m.	Information in the main news of "Channel 3" TV	50 seconds
30 November 7:30 p.m.	Information in the main news of "Nova TV	50 seconds
30 November 7:00 p.m.	Information in the main news of "7 Dni"	50 seconds
30 November 7:30 p.m.	Information in the main news of "bTV"	50 seconds
30 November 6:30 p.m.	Report from the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the main news of "Eurocom" cable TV	2 minutes
1 December 8:10 a.m.	Report from the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding + interview with minister Maneva in the early morning show of the BNTV "Business Breakfast"	1,5 minutes

- **The main interviews and news reports are taped and are available in the BCEG Project office**

List of the journalists

Participants in the Media/Journalists
orientation meeting
23 November 2000,
held by the BCEG PMU and the MoEW press officer

Iva Mihcova	Press center of the Council of Ministers
Tcvetelina Atanasova	Bulgarian National TV
Daniela Boianova	Bulgarian National TV
Viktor Ivanov	“Sega” (daily)
Sevdalina Nikolova	Bulg. Telegraph Agency
Liliana Chaleva	“Express” Radio
Iva Galabova	“24 hours” (daily)
Diana Tcankova	“Demokratcia” (daily)
Mara Georgieva	“Kapitalpress” (weekly)
Maria Dimitrova	“Bulgaria” Bulg. Nat. Radio (for abroad)
Kalina Varbanova	“Alma Mater” Student’s Radio
Tcanka Misheva	“Hristo Botev” Bulg. Nat. Radio
Roza Damianova	“Hristo Botev” Bulg. Nat. Radio
Hristo Dalchev	“Hristo Botev” Bulg. Nat. Radio

List of journalists

who participated **the launch of “The Green Gold of Bulgaria”** publication on 28
November

Galia Naneva	“Vereia” TV
Stanislava Boshnakova	“Alma Mater” Radio
Anelia Nikolova	“Standart” (daily)
Krum Stoev	“Demokratcia”(daily)
Iulia Stoianova	“Demo” TV
Georgi Stoianov	“Patashestvia” (weekly)
Rozalin Kostov	“Gradina” (magazine)
Roza Damianova	“Hristo Botev” Bulg. Nat. Radio
Iveta Georgieva	“Zdrave”(magazine)
Paulina Iorgova	“Zemia”
Maria Dimitrova	“Bulgaria” Bulg. Nat. Radio (for abroad)
Silvia Nikolova	“Bulgaria” Bulg. Nat. Radio (for abroad)
Ina Galabova	“24 hours” (daily)
Ana Mihcova	“Trud” (daily)
Sevdalina Nikolova	Bulgarian Telegraph Agency
Tania Petrova	“Sega” (daily)
Daniela Veleva	“Duma” (daily)
Diana Tcankova	“Demokratcia” (daily)

***News Articles from both the Green Gold Launching and MOU
signing, follow***

Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project Scope of Work (final draft)

Clearing House Mechanism – Phase 1 Needs Assessment

Background

The USAID-Bulgarian Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project contains technical and financial resources in support of greater public awareness of the role of national parks in conserving important Bulgarian biological diversity. Activities are aimed at increasing public awareness of biodiversity, protected areas, and related issues at the national, regional, and local levels. Our efforts are largely aimed at the general public through mass media, at target groups around the national parks that we assist, and at Member of Parliament/the National Assembly. One effective means to increase public awareness on biodiversity conservation is to develop and improve the mechanisms for regular information sharing.

As a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Aarhus Convention, Bulgaria is bound to provide information on biological diversity and its conservation, as well as on issues of the environment that does/could affect the lives of its citizens. The CBD provides for the appointment and maintenance of a “clearing house mechanism” that affords regular and easy exchange of information on biological diversity with the nation, and between countries. In addition, the Aarhus Convention provides for citizen rights of access to information on the status and quality of the environment, particularly as it affects their lives.

Bulgaria is confronted with complying with the conditions assumed as signatory to both Conventions. This Scope of Work examines the role(s) and dimension of a biological conservation clearing house within the Bulgarian context. In addition to the Government’s responsibilities for establishing a CHM, other opportunities will be examined, such as more active engagement of Bulgarian environmental NGOs in timely and accurate information sharing on common biodiversity conservation agendas.

This Needs Assessment is designed to complement the efforts and activities of UNDP’s follow-on assistance to the GOB-Ministry of Environment and Waters – Clearing House Mechanism(CHM). It will also assist the efforts of the Biological Diversity Conservation Program of the Regional Environmental Center, and its plans establish a role for an NGO in national biodiversity information exchange, as well as in Balkan, regional biodiversity information exchange.

Broad Issues for Clearing House Mechanism(s) in Bulgaria

Broad issues contributing to development of a Clearing House Mechanism(s) in Bulgaria still need to be addressed, and are not directly part of this scope of work. These are larger issues, and will only be resolved over time, and in dialog with Government. Towards this end, the REC of Budapest, will host a workshop aimed at furthering development of an

NGO clearing house mechanism for Bulgaria. This workshop will use the information and analysis provided by this needs assessment to focus the discussion.

1. The role and responsibilities of Government in relation to the CBD and the Aarhus Convention
2. The roles and responsibilities of Non-Governmental Organizations in biodiversity conservation information management and sharing, and their role at national and regional levels of CHM operation;
3. The technical dimensions of information sharing as afforded by computer technology and internet services;
4. The formats, frequency, and dynamics of information exchange.

Eventual funding support for a capacity building needs assessment within the Ministry of Environment and Waters, is expected from the Bulgarian office of the United Nations Development Program, as part of its national biodiversity conservation enabling activities.

Purpose

The Needs Assessment will examine the “market” demand and uses for information sharing on priority biodiversity conservation issues. The Needs Assessment is seen as the first step in the development of an overall role for Bulgarian, non governmental organizations in national and regional biodiversity conservation information sharing. Information gathered during the needs assessment will help to define three overall objectives:

1. The scope of a national CHM that is operated and maintained by an NGO.
2. The role and responsibilities of an NGO - CHM, and how it might relate to a CHM operated and maintained by Government(s);
3. Identify and prioritize types of biodiversity conservation information, identify and prioritize target groups for which information will be gathered, and with whom information will be shared.

Needs Assessment Strategy

The USAID BCEG Project will identify and contract a team of professionals (3-4 people) to conduct the needs assessment. This team will be supervised by the BCEG Project Management Unit, and conduct its activities on behalf of the BCEG Project.

The Needs Assessment will have three phases:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Phase 1 | Formation of Assessment Team and Development of Assessment tools, techniques, budget, and timetable. |
| Phase 2 | Administration of the Needs Assessment and Preliminary Report |
| Phase 3 | Participation in the REC/CHM Workshop and Final Report |

The BCEG Project has a direct supervision and management role of the Needs Assessment Team at the end of Phase 1. Project approval is needed prior to embarking on Phase 2, and again, prior to sharing information in a Workshop format, prior to Phase 3.

In order to undertake this Needs Assessment, the following tasks are envisioned:

Tasks

1. Develop assessment tools and techniques that allow information to be collected in a systematic fashion from at least the following major, biodiversity conservation “users” groups – the MOEW/NNPS, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Mass Media, citizen groups/NGOs, inter-governmental agencies, the general public.
 - a) Identification of biodiversity conservation information categories;
 - b) Prioritization of biodiversity conservation information categories (according to users that are interviewed), to include, but not limited to:
 - Compliance with International Conventions to which Bulgaria is signatory
 - Compliance with EU Directives
 - Protected Area Network
 - National Ecological Network
 - National biodiversity conservation priority actions
 - c) Sources of existing and proposed biodiversity conservation information
 - d) Frequency with which this information is collected, updated, and published.
 - e) Formats, existing and preferred to biodiversity conservation information
 - f) Existing users of biodiversity conservation information
 - a) Proposed users of biodiversity conservation information
2. Develop a specific needs assessment budget, team, and interview schedule
3. Administer the assessment, and conduct in-depth interviews, focal group discussions, and field visits, as necessary;
4. Identify, review and provide a synopsis (according to major information categories identified) of all international and regional biodiversity conservation clearing house mechanisms as available on the world wide web, and from other sources (as appropriate).
5. Provide a detailed draft report in (English and Bulgarian) with: (a) an analysis of the findings from the needs assessment, (b) the methodology used, (c) a detailed list of people contacted, (with names, addresses and contact information), (d) description of other CHMs with an analysis of their advantages and disadvantages; (e) and recommendations for establishing a Clearing House Mechanism(s) in Bulgaria.
6. Based upon a review and feedback of this draft, complete a final report, and produce two final copies each, in Bulgarian and English.
7. As authors and contractors, participate in at least the REC sponsored workshop(s) dedicated to furthering the development of Clearing House Mechanism(s) in Bulgaria. Present the results of the needs assessment exercise to the workshop participants, and produce a synopsis of the final report for general distribution to all workshop participants.

Outputs

1. Approved survey tool for information collection and analysis
2. Approved schedule/timetable and budget for survey exercise
3. Draft final report on outcome of the needs assessment
4. Final report, based on the needs assessment and workshop.

Team formation and development of this needs assessment will commence February 1, 2001. A draft final report will be completed by March 31, 2001.

Ministry of Environment and Water
Outgoing No. 1451
Sofia 22.08.2000

TO THE MINISTER OF
ENVIRONMENT AND WATER
MS. EVDOKIA MANEVA

Approved
(signature)

REPORT

by

Ganya Ilieva Hristova – Junior Expert at Strategies, Affiliation Programs and Projects
Department

REGARDING: Participation in a course on Business and Ecology organized by
the Central European University in Budapest, July 10-21, 2000

Dear Ms. Maneva,

With your order No. KCH-139/05.07.2000 I was sent on a business trip from July 10 to July 21, 2001, in Budapest, Hungary, where I participated in a course on Business and Ecology. All expenses for my travel and stay were covered by ARD – BCEG Project. The training was organized by and was carried out at the Central European University.

The training course included lectures on the following topics:

1. Business, Ecology and Ethics.
2. Sustainable Development and Economy.
3. Society, Ethics and Environment.
4. Sustainable Production and Consumption.
5. Management Skills in the Field of Environmental Protection.
6. Environmental Restoration in the Central and Eastern Europe.

Together with the ARD representative, Kamelia Georgieva, Enterprise Development Specialist, I presented a concept for a project, elaborated especially for the purposes of this training, titled “Introducing Economic Tools for the National Park Management” – project goal, expected results and actions needed to achieve them.

The project concept goal is to introduce financial mechanisms for national park management, by applying the principle of “sharing the benefits” (between the respective national park and the producer of a given product), with the introduction of a system for “licensing” of goods and services, related to the national parks.

The activities for the achievement of the goals are: analysis of the existing legislative basis in Bulgaria concerning the licensing issues and analysis of the existing practices in Bulgaria and abroad; analysis of the stakeholders interested in purchasing licenses – for production of souvenirs, for national park “guides”, for using park logo and name, etc.; conducting training workshops; preparation of a draft regulation for applying the economic tools; starting small enterprises for production of (for example) souvenirs using the park name.

The expected project results are: (1) opportunities analyzed and mechanisms developed for generating funds for the national parks; (2) financial mechanisms developed and applied; (3) pilot activities for application of tools; (4) increased public support for the national parks.

The project was well received by the trainers at the Central European University and the other course participants.

The project concept as presented above is not related to concrete activities, deadlines and agencies.

The course was exclusively for training purposes. I will be able to use the knowledge and experience obtained by the lectures, as well as from the projects presented by other course participants, in my direct work in the application of economic tools for environmental conservation.

Sincerely,
(signed)
G. Hristova

Title: Introduction of Mechanisms for National Park Management and Economic Development around the Parks

Why do we need the project?

- Extremely valuable and relatively well conserved National Parks;
- New Protected Area's Act and new Directorates;
- No sufficient funding in the State Budget;
- The population around the Parks suffers of economic transitions.

The goal of the project is to introduce financial mechanisms for National Parks management applying the "share benefit" approach the case of licenses.

The expected results of the project:

- Mechanisms for income generation;
- Regulation developed and approved;
- Potential small entrepreneurs identified and trained;
- Pilot activities;
- Public support.

Actions to achieve the goals:

- Legal analysis and analysis of the existing licensing practices;
- Stakeholders analysis;
- Workshop to develop the philosophy of the legal regulation;
- Drafting and approval of the regulation;
- Training of the local entrepreneurs;
- Start up a pilot small enterprise.

The whole process is supported by a public relations campaign on the relevant levels.

The implementation of the project will be monitoring specific indicators.

Implementing bodies are:

- Ministry of Environment and Water;
- Rila National Park Directorate;
- Central Balkan National Park Directorate.



ARD Bulgaria
Biodiversity Conservation &
Economic Growth
Project
Sponsored by
USAID and the Government of Bulgaria

Trip Report

To: PH, KG, ARD, File

Date: 15 Nov 2000

From: KK - Romania trip /09 - 10 Nov 2000/

Purpose of the trip: Participation in Workshop "Implication of Land Restitution Programs on Achieving WB/WWF Alliance Targets in Eastern Europe and Central Asian Region", Brasov, Romania.

Participants sponsored by BC&EG Project:

Mr. Mihail Mihaylov - MoEW, NNPS, Senior expert

Mr. Lachezar Ivanov - MoEW, Rila NPD, Forestry expert

Mr. Krassimir Kostov - ARD BC&EG Project PMU

Contacted people:

Mr. Dorin Ciuka - Romsilva,RO

Mr. Mircea Verghelet - Piatra Craiului NP Manager,RO

Mr. Florea Trifoi - Biodiversity Conservation PMU, MWFEP,RO

Mr. Dorel Cioaca - Biodiversity Conservation PMU, MWFEP,RO

Ms. Gabriela Mladin - Biodiversity Conservation PMU, MWFEP,RO

Mr. Ioan Abrudan - Transilvania University, forest Engineer, Project
Coordinator, RO

Mr. Dragos Mihai - National Forest Administration, RO

Ms. Elizabeth Samec - WWF Coordinator, AUT

Mr. Zoltan Rakonczay - WWF Forest Officer, HU

Mr. Gerhard Dieterle - WB Forestry Specialist ECA region, USA

Mr. Donatas Dudutis - Forests and PA Dept. MoE, LIT

Mr. Steve Sepp - Managing Director, Eco-consult, GER

Mr. Matti Raisanen - Indufor Oy, FI.

Ms. Alicia Grimes - USAID/EE/EEUD/ENR, USA

Outputs of the event: The workshop was a two day event, held in Aro Palace hotel in Brasov, Romania. Transportation was provided by DBF Project. The workshop was a final event in the preparation of a report on the implications of land restitution programs on achieving WB/WWF Alliance targets in Eastern

Europe and Central Asia Region. The report was a joint effort of two consultant companies – Indufor Oy /Finland/ and Eco-Consult /Germany/.

The discussed matter also included a Certification of forests in the region as one of the targets of the WB/WWF Alliance, as well as Sustainable Forest Management /SFM/.

However, the draft report was not distributed in advance and was available only for the second day of the workshop. During the first day, an introduction was made and only fragments of the report were distributed. The unofficial comments for the overall report content were that the consultants did not work close enough with the local party and the coordinator, thus a lot of incorrect information appears in the report and does not reflect the current situation.

The consultants tried to amend some deficiencies through recommendations made by the participants. Despite these, there were many verbal disagreements with the overall content.

The second day topic was more focussed to the forest certification, and its importance. The main discussion was directed to the type of certification /there are 26 types of forest certifications, 4 of which are most used and recognized worldwide/. Despite the arguments, the conclusion on forest certification, from the Romanian party was that the forest certification is mostly imposed by the market, thus has purely economic reasons and not environmental. This appears to be a main point of disagreement. According to the WB/WWF Alliance requirements, the introduction of forest certification must be a parallel action for establishment of new protected areas along with. This was clearly stated by the WWF representative Mrs. Elizabeth Samec, in the conclusion part of the event, where concerns and expectations were expressed.

The WB/WWF Alliance clearly supports the Forest Stewardship Council /FSC/ certification system, before the PEFC /Pan-European Forest Certification/, due to the FSC centralized accreditation body.

During the workshop, various meetings with Romania's protected area managers were carried. Due to the different structure of the Romania protected areas administration, the parks are subordinated to forestry agency company, attached to the Ministry of Waters, Forests and Environment Protection. The agency's name is "Romsilva", and all national parks are under its management and budget. On a meeting with Mr. M.Mihailov and KK, the head of Romsilva – Mr. Dorin Ciuka, has accepted and welcomed Peter Hetz's idea for exchange visits of Romanian colleagues and verbally had authorized Mr. Mircea Verghelet, Manager of Piatra Craiului National Park to act on his behalf.

The products of the GEF Biodiversity Conservation Project were distributed, highly appreciated by the Romanian party.

Several informal meetings were conducted with park managing agencies, where all Romanian colleagues greeted the idea for cross-border cooperation positively.

Recommended follow-up:

Considering USAID and MOEW interest in such cooperation, proceed with the necessary steps to establish durable links and contacts with Romania's protected

areas managers /bearing in mind the recently signed agreement for 5year cooperation between the both ministries of environment/.

- official contact for trans-border sistership between Bulgarian and Romanian National Park
- use official cooperation and seek linkages with other USAID funded projects in Romania, with regard to encourage mutual cooperation in nature protection between the countries and thus strengthen USAID efforts and support in the region.

NOTE: Attached are the two reports of Mr. M. Mihailov, MOEW/NNPS, L. Ivanov, Rila NPD, Annex – Example on Rights and Obligations of the State and Private Forest Owners.

KK

TO: Mrs Evdokia Maneva
Minister of Environment and Water

REPORT

By Mihail Mihaylov, government expert at the NNPS, MOEW

Regarding: a business trip to Romania, according to your order No: 226/07.11.2000, for a participation in a workshop: “Restitution and Certification of Forests in Central and Eastern Europe”.

Dear Mrs. Maneva,

From 8th to 11th of November, in Brashov was held a workshop “Restitution and Certification of Forests in Central and Eastern Europe”, organized by WWF-International.

The Bulgarian party was formed by representatives of MAF, MOEW and the Forestry Chamber. Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Albania and others were represented by employees of the respective forestry and environmental agencies, as well as forest owners associations.

Lecturers from Germany and Finland have presented summarized information on the forest restitution problems, as for the private forest ownership in the European countries.

We were acquainted with the requirements and the procedures, benefits and the necessary steps for the introduction in the Central and Eastern Europe countries of so called “Forest certification”, the role of the protected territories in it inclusive.

From the participants’ side information was presented for the stage of forest restitution and the potential problems of their protection and management, including in the protected territories.

The countries, where the certification process has began, shared their experience and the issues these are facing. In Bulgaria, this process is due to start, under the coordination of MAF, respectively NFB.

Separate from the workshop topic we had a conversation with Mr. Dieterle from the WB, who informed us about the expressed interest in supporting the restoration of the damages, caused by the forest fires in Bulgaria shaped as large GEF Project, justified before all as restoration of the biodiversity.

With regard to the above I suggest:

1. MOEW to participate actively in the process of the introduction of the forest certification in Bulgaria through representative/s also by the NNPS in a working group, which is due to be formed by the MAF.
Encharged : NNPS
2. MOEW to support the official proposal /expected to be developed by MAF/ for a GEF project, related with activities restoring the damages caused by the forest fires and the protection of the biodiversity in the forest fund.

23.11.2000

With respect:

To: ARD Bulgaria

REPORT

By Lachezar Feodorov Ivanov – senior expert, Rila NPD

Regarding: attending workshop in Romania

Mr. Mihailov,

With regard the Brashov workshop, 09-10.11.2000, I present to you the present report.

The topic of the workshop was restitution and certification of forests in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. In the workshop participated eight countries /Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Croatia and Slovenia/ with 32 representatives. Due to the different level of development, regarding the forest restitution and certification. The more advanced countries shared their experience.

The discussions in a larger scale were regarding the certification, due to the restitution, finished or at a final stage in most of the countries. Major problem appears to be the sustainable forest management by the private owners, bearing in mind that these have lost their links with the private forest management in the period preceding the state /centralized/ management. Other issue appears to be the small scale of the private forests /in Bulgaria average 0.5 – 1 Ha./. This imposes the necessity of cooperation or joining of several owners.

Two certification standards exist – FSC and PEFC, as the WB supports the FSC standard. At present the market exercises pressure over the private owners to prepare certification for their products.

A presentation on the topic has been made mainly by Romania, as well as four other countries. After each presentation, concerning the restitution and the certification of forests, work group followed. The discussions were mostly concerning the problems of the future owners regarding the sustainable forest management and ways for additional support.

Prepared was a draft annex, for the rights and the obligations of the private forest owners and of the state. In the discussions participated also representatives of private forest owner, which made the results more objective. The received information, resulting from the discussions, was processes and summarized by the consultants team and was included in the workshop report, which will reflect over the restitution and certification project.

Republic of Macedonia Trip Report

- Dates** December 1 – December 4, 2000
- Participants** Alicia Grimes, CTO, BCEG Project, BCEG Project staff: Peter Hetz, Kamelia Georgieva, Dimitrina Boteva, and Krassimir Kostov
- Hosts** Public Enterprise for Physical and Urban Planning, (PEPUP) Ministry of Environment, Republic of Macedonia
- Purpose** To better understand the context of land use planning practiced in Macedonia for their protected area system, and for existing national parks;
- To examine opportunities for strengthening the management planning process used in support of protected areas system planning, as well as National Park planning;
- Identify opportunities for exchanges of literature, ideas and personnel between the national parks planning and management systems of the two countries.
- Background** In early October, 2000, the PEPUP Director and two staff were hosted in the BCEG Project, PMU offices and received an orientation to management planning for national parks in Bulgaria practiced by the Project. PEPUP staff were impressed with the dimensions of physical and social planning employed by the project in support of biodiversity conservation and national parks. There is NO precedent in Macedonia for biodiversity conservation planning, and no provision for including social, economic and public education activities in the process. While Macedonia has a longer history of national park designations than Bulgaria, it has not yet adapted contemporary park management planning models and processes to support them. The PEPUP planning team is interested in remedying this shortcoming in the next round of national park management plans, and in the designation of two new protected areas.
- The future of protected areas planning and management, the role of the Ministry of Environment, civic and civil participation, and opportunities for economic growth and development are presently being shaped in a new Protected Areas Act.

Itinerary

1. Visitors were escorted by two PEPUP staff for the entire trip. We visited an area proposed as a new national park with trans-boundary implications – Shar Planina, on the borders with Albania and Kosovo, with a proposed area of approximately 50,000 ha.

2. We visited Macedonia's largest national park – Mavrovo, designated in 1978, and consisting of 72,000 ha, but also embracing ski areas and a resident population in 36 villages (approx. 35,000 people.) It sits on the western border of Macedonia, with Albania.
3. Galicica National Park – designated in 1958, and occupying the high mountain territory of 23,000 ha, between Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa
4. Pelister National Park, designated in 1948, and covering the high mountain areas known at “baba” to the east of Lake Prespa, and covering 12,500 ha.

All these protected areas can lay claim to their importance for biodiversity conservation, primarily through a system of strict nature reserves. Limited attempts have been made to integrate biodiversity conservation management planning into the only two other zones employed in national parks – an *economic zone*, in which forestry is practiced, and a *tourism zone*, in which hotels, ski areas, roads, and walking trails are located. These Parks are largely, IUCN Category V, national parks, with a need to engage the community, town, and urban groups in their future management zoning and definition of activities.

The last physical plans for these parks were produced in 1985.

Debriefing and USAID

A debriefing was held with USAID's Mission Director, Stephen Haynes (and attended by Community Self-help Initiative Officer, Sladjana Srbinoska) . They are in the final stages of preparing their Country Strategy and R4. The Mission will continue to focus largely on D&G issues, as well as Economic Growth objectives. Two issues, however, are worth noting.

1. While the Mission does not specifically have a Strategic Objective dedicated to the ENR sector, the Mission director expressed his interest in following up USAID assistance to Environmental Action Planing (EAP). Any focus should include activities directly related to the objectives of citizen participation, community development, economic growth, and income generation.

He would welcome a concept paper/proposal addressing protected area management planning, and support to protected areas. Any assistance would, however, be contingent upon the Government's ability to comply with USAID concerns for the status and management of the National Environmental Fund.

2. Director Haynes indicated his willingness to support (financially) the visit of Macedonian protected area planner and managers to activities supported by the BCEG Project and Bulgarian National Parks. He would entertain proposals as appropriate.

Actions

- PEPUP staff to advise the newly appointed Minister of Environment on the trip and potential for USAID support. They plan to submit a concept paper for review and comment by USAID- Macedonia.

- BCEG Project will continue to inform the staff of the Macedonian National Parks, and the PEPUP of public participation and economic growth activities linked to the Project. Any specific invitations will be coordinated through the USAID Mission in Macedonia and Bulgaria.

- The BCEG Project will continue to avail Macedonian protected area staff of information and materials relevant to protected areas management planning and implementation.