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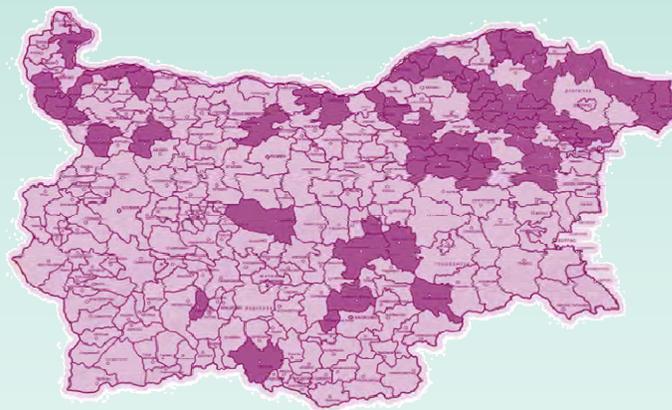
## BULGARIA



### PLEDGE

(PARTNERS IN LOCAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNMENT  
EFFECTIVENESS)

**FINAL REPORT**  
**1998 - 2004**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## SUMMARY PROGRAM DESIGN

PLEDGE is a highly successful, local economic development program which creates jobs, starts new businesses, supports local NGO development and, most importantly, develops lasting community capacity to make better economic decisions, take greater responsibility, be more inclusive, and demand transparent action. The purpose of this report is to highlight how PLEDGE achieved results in the most economically-challenged communities in Bulgaria.

The Partners in Local Economic Development and Government Effectiveness (PLEDGE) Program, developed by Worldwide Strategies, Inc. (WSI) and funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) in cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), was launched in September 1998. The PLEDGE methodology integrated national development policy with the economic challenges and opportunities facing workers, businesses, and communities. Collaborating with national and local government, PLEDGE focused on local economic development, otherwise known as Community Economic Renewal, one of three components comprising WSI's Integrated Community Development Program.

From September 1998 through September 2004, PLEDGE completed LED projects in 55 communities or 22% of Bulgaria's 256 municipalities. All but one of these communities now embrace the program's core value: *people, not money, create positive change*. Communities learned to trust in themselves and hold the belief that working as a team leads a community down a more stable and propitious economic path.

*"We are not used to team work. Every group within our local community operates separately. The administration seems to be doing a formal job. Private business and local organizations all work in isolation. Therefore, one of PLEDGE's main goals is to bring about this missing unity. No success will come to people who keep pulling the rug in their own direction".*

**Svetoslav Mladenov, IAS, Lom**

These guiding principles were key elements in the success of the program:

- Create a community spirit of renewal and hope
  - Establish community initiative and responsibility
  - Introduce decentralized decision-making
  - Develop cooperation, collaboration and partnership among local players
  
- Seek realistic solutions to identified problems
  - Focus on an economic base that utilizes community assets
  - Assess local economic strengths, opportunities and needs
  - Install a decision-making process using local data
  - Introduce an open, transparent process

- Achieve sustainable results using local assets
  - Implement a job creation project
  - Coordinate resources for maximum benefit

Working with staff from the NGO, public and private sectors, PLEDGE trained volunteers to become Industrial Adjustment Specialists (IAS) responsible for organizing a broad base of local partners into a strategic planning team. Community teams were then trained to identify local economic problems and opportunities and to design sustainable projects that would create jobs.

## PROGRAM RESULTS

Through this community participation process, PLEDGE brought about the following significant change in 54 communities.<sup>1</sup>

<b>Increased Employment of the Workforce</b>	
5,251 Jobs Created	941 Jobs Saved
<b>Increased Business Activity</b>	
188 Businesses Started	283 Businesses Expanded
<b>Improved Production</b>	
130,744 Decares of Fallow Land Reclaimed	
<b>Increased Capacity to Pursue Post-Project LED Opportunities</b>	
361 Follow-on LED Projects Using Pledge Process	
<b>Improved Business Climate</b>	
634 Local Level Improvements in Financial, Regulatory, Physical Infrastructure, and Services	
<b>Strengthened Local Partnerships</b>	
1,052 Partners from Agriculture, Infrastructure, and Business-Related LED Projects	
998 Inter-industry Partnerships Created	

This report documents PLEDGE's beginning, results and sustaining activities. It focuses on the factors that led to the program's initiation, organization and management as well as the methodology, activities, challenges, successes and lessons of implementation. Case studies of

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A: Performance Data Table, September 30, 2004

35 communities, available at <http://www.w-s-i.net/bulgaria/>, describe in greater detail municipal profiles, results and lessons learned.

Another 20 communities participated via a jointly-funded pilot effort with the Bulgarian Ministry of Labor's Social Investment Fund (SIF), USAID and the World Bank as part of the SIF's poverty reduction program. This pilot demonstrated that the PLEDGE process can be fast tracked to build community social capital while creating jobs within a twelve-month period.

PLEDGE's legacy is that community members developed sufficient capacity to apply the methods learned to other community development projects. For example, in one community, farmers created a village revolving loan fund to overcome the lack of access to credit and another won a grant to remodel its hospital. In nearly every community in which PLEDGE worked, teams applied for and received additional funding for other community economic renewal project ideas (361 to date) that were developed as a result of their participation in the PLEDGE program.

## INTRODUCTION

Building on early indicators of success achieved by a similar project in Hungary, PLEDGE was the second worker, community and enterprise adjustment project undertaken by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to address the negative effects of economic restructuring in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> This limited implementation experience required flexibility from all partners in customizing methods and approaches to Bulgarian conditions. In addition, the expectation that PLEDGE would demonstrate immediate results required a compressed start-up period with little time to establish a firm base of program policies and procedures. Underlying the PLEDGE project were two sets of conditions which affected its development: 1) the economic and social conditions within Bulgaria, and 2) the strategic focus and structure of the USAID/Bulgaria mission.

### BULGARIA'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Bulgaria in 1998 was a country of 8 million people, with unemployment averaging 14% and as high as 60% - 70% in rural areas. In addition:

- ✓ Economic restructuring and privatization processes were just beginning;
- ✓ Political reorientation was commencing;
- ✓ Control from the national government and capital city to local grassroots leaders was being re-channeled; and there was
- ✓ An expressed desire for local government, businesses and non-governmental organizations to work together.

### USAID/USDOL PROGRAM FOCUS

It was against this backdrop that USDOL and USAID worked during the summer of 1998 on a specific project design. In October 1988, the departure of the USAID Mission Director, as well as a gap of several months in the appointment of a successor, left a leadership void. The mission director had been a strong advocate for PLEDGE's introduction. Support from USAID staff was not available as PLEDGE entered its critical startup period.

The initial singular focus on local economic development (LED) was agreed to by USDOL and USAID during initial negotiations for the project design. The rationale was that other USAID projects had or would address the Worker Adjustment and Enterprise Competitiveness components that comprise WSI's Integrated Community Development Program.

However, PLEDGE's scope of responsibility was expanded as the project was launched. PLEDGE incorporated into its activities some of the elements of WSI's Enterprise

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix B: Worker, Community and Enterprise Adjustment Model

Competitiveness component designed to support growth and expansion of small businesses. The Quick Start Program is a vocational training program that focuses on customized, short-term worker retraining in new or retooled companies. PLEDGE assumed responsibility for institutionalizing this program, which had been initiated by USDOL the year before, within the Ministry of Labor's National Employment Service (NES).

During the final program year, greater emphasis was placed upon developing the competitive advantages of small businesses via applied business growth and retention methods. In the Smolyan region, the creation of the first Bulgarian Tourism Cluster was developed as a natural outgrowth of Smolyan's LED project, a craft street that promotes traditional Bulgarian folk art.

## **THE LED INVESTMENT**

The LED process is composed of two phases which later evolved into three. The LED action plan was designed to begin with selection and training of IAS, followed by the selection of communities. During PLEDGE's pilot stage, action steps were reordered and compressed to obtain results quickly so these activities occurred simultaneously.

### PHASE ONE: COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Phase 1 involves a six-month period to select participating communities and volunteer IAS and to introduce LED principles and concepts.

#### **IAS Selection and Orientation**

During the pilot stage, 28 IAS were assigned by partner organizations during the second month of project start-up. IAS were required to:

- Represent the partner organization and bring their expertise
- Dedicate several hours a week
- Learn the PLEDGE implementation process
- Represent different geographic regions
- Be responsible for completing key functions

IASs participated in an intensive week-long orientation and training program during which the community economic renewal model and simulation was presented. Because community selection had not yet occurred, these IAS represented national partners from all around Bulgaria. To augment the training, IASs were provided written instructions on community organization including types of participants and the various sectors that should be invited to ensure cross-cutting representation. Because the IAS had greater knowledge about the community and its leadership resources, PLEDGE left community organization to the discretion of IAS team, providing advice and guidance as needed.

## IAS Training

PLEDGE recognized that substantial on-the-job training and significant time would be required. After the nine pilot communities were selected, 14 IASs were chosen to participate in a study tour to Hungary and Poland where USDOL/WSI had other similar projects. The study tour was designed to develop a clearer understanding of how the LED model is applied and what could be accomplished. The study tour included:

- Five days in Hungary visiting diverse community projects and witnessing job creation results.
- Three days in Poland examining how the LED model could be adapted to specific country conditions, i.e. Poland focused on the coal mining sector.

IASs for Rounds II - IV participated in study tours to successful Bulgarian pilot sites. PLEDGE staff designed these tours around experienced IAS describing their experiences and lessons learned. This in-country learning not only reduced costs but also proved to be an essential network-building mechanism. In addition to highlighting Bulgarian successes, a strong nationwide network was established.

## IAS Organization

IAS were organized into teams of at least four for each community. The teams typically included one member from the municipality, one from the Employment Service, and the other two representing economic development, unions or NGOs. As a result of this selection process and the team configuration, some IASs volunteered to work with two or three communities. The teams met between workshops to discuss common factors or problems, to review what had been done in previous workshops, and to prepare for the next workshop. Teams received training from PLEDGE in interpersonal, teambuilding, problem solving and group facilitation skills.

## IAS Performance

A recurring question is how well a volunteer approach could provide the staff support PLEDGE needed. During the pilot round in which IAS were assigned by a partner organization, it became clear that a few lacked the requisite skills and commitment; but there were some that proved to be vital to the success of the community project. This became a lesson learned for subsequent rounds whereby all other IAS were recruited and selected by PLEDGE through a process of applications and interviews. PLEDGE-selected IAS generally performed well and were considered the key element to community success.<sup>3</sup>

**312 IAS volunteers** from the public, private and NGO sectors facilitated the economic transition process and are a sustaining economic and community development resource.

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<sup>3</sup> Case studies for each community at <http://www.w-s-i.net/bulgaria/> provide specifics about IAS performance.

### **Community Site Selection**

With approximately 256 municipalities in Bulgaria, it was clearly necessary to simplify and limit the site selection process. The first step was to contact municipalities to inform them about PLEDGE and to solicit expressions of interest for participation. To expedite this process during the pilot round, PLEDGE worked through the six Regional Associations of Municipalities (RAM), presenting the program at association meetings. Each RAM was asked to provide a staff member part-time to assist PLEDGE in introducing the program to municipalities within their regions. Each RAM was invited to express in writing its interest in collaborating with PLEDGE and its commitment to provide one staff person for at least 20 hours per week for the duration of the PLEDGE project. All six RAMs provided an expression of interest and staff commitment. This collaboration proved to be mutually beneficial in that PLEDGE gained quick introductions to municipalities and the RAMs were enabled to clearly demonstrate their ability to serve member needs and interests.

PLEDGE decided to restrict the pilot round to three regions based on logistical discussions with the Advisory Committee. Not only would much greater amounts of time and travel be required but it would also be difficult to provide the degree of individualized assistance that was anticipated. PLEDGE chose to work in three regions to gain experience, thus contiguous regions Tracia, Rhodopy and Maritza were selected.

### **Community Application Process**

PLEDGE prepared a pamphlet detailing eligibility criteria, deadlines and application procedures. Promotional meetings were organized using local contacts and partners to increase awareness and encourage municipalities, NGOs and the private sector to submit a two-page letter of interest. This letter demonstrated community motivation and ability to self-organize. It required a community profile, statement of commitment to participate for at least 18 months and a demonstration of support from various segments of community evidenced by the number and diversity of signatures on the letter. Because a limited number of municipalities could participate, these procedures were considered vital. The profile encouraged the community to develop an initial overview that provided basic information. The 18-month commitment was essential to assess community needs, collect and analyze economic data, and work with a broad spectrum of the community to select and implement a viable project. The commitment signatures reinforced the emphasis PLEDGE placed on community as well as economic development, i.e. the potential value of bringing the community together and encouraging its members to consider the needs of the community as a whole rather than special interests.

## Site Selection Criteria

Faced with the need to select from a large number of municipalities, clear guidelines were required to provide a decision framework for PLEDGE and the Advisory Committee. These criteria incorporated the varied interests of USDOL, USAID, the Government of Bulgaria, or specific funding requirements.<sup>4</sup>

Following a workshop with selected IASS, PLEDGE proposed this initial set of criteria:

- ✓ Human potential and motivation
- ✓ Population diversity
- ✓ Smaller population
- ✓ High unemployment
- ✓ Diverse workforce characteristics e.g. out-migration, age, skills, ethnicity
- ✓ Unused or under-utilized resources

Discussions also brought forth the following selection considerations to enable comparisons between communities:

- Experience with other donor projects
- No donor experience
- Social and economic diversity among communities
- Developed private sector
- Absent or limited private sector.

Two factors stand out with respect to the selection criteria. First, the criteria reflected PLEDGE's desire to learn from experience, to enable comparisons between different types of communities, and to avoid assumptions about which might perform better. Second, more emphasis was placed on the program as a whole in that some communities that met the individual criteria were not selected because it was important to broaden PLEDGE's demonstration experience. As a result, PLEDGE was able to work in a diverse range of challenged communities including large and small, industrially successful, economically challenged, and those with high ethnic (Roma and Turkish) populations.

The volume of expressions of interest proved to be a major selection task. To assist with the process, and to reinforce PLEDGE's commitment to a fair and transparent selection process, the Advisory Group assumed an active role. PLEDGE staff prepared a summary matrix of all interested communities and submitted these data along with recommendations for an identified set of communities to ensure that desired characteristics were present. In addition, the staff attempted to assess the level and breadth of community commitment. The Advisory Committee

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<sup>4</sup> Selection criteria were intended as broad guidelines for the pilot stage. In subsequent rounds, the criteria were refined or changed. For example, supplemental USAID funding focused on communities affected by the Danube River embargo while the World Bank Social Investment Fund focused on poverty in Bulgaria's northeastern tier.

reviewed the materials with staff, contributed their knowledge and experience, and developed a final set of recommended communities.

### **The LED Workshop Process**

Community participants complete a series of four, one-day workshops that focus on principles of economic development and community assessment and analysis tasks, while also learning participative planning processes. The workshops progress from a general introduction of LED concepts and principles to an analysis of community needs and resources to identification and assessment of potential community projects which would stimulate the community's economic renewal. Team members collect and analyze information on community conditions, problems, and resources and then identify and assess the feasibility of potential projects which will begin to address at least one of the needs identified. In the final workshop, subcommittees present a short list of projects and one is selected by the overall community team.

Four workshops were conducted at four-week intervals in each community. Workshops were also conducted consecutively in each community within a round. The first round workshops were conducted by WSI consultant, Marion Bentley, with PLEDGE staff building sufficient capacity to conduct all subsequent rounds.

The workshops were designed to:

- ✓ Develop a sufficient working familiarity with basic LED concepts and processes to utilize them in their communities
- ✓ Encourage cohesion and identity among different segments of the community
- ✓ Foster support for an effort that would benefit the community
- ✓ Provide experience with team decision-making processes
- ✓ Experience positive effects of joint problem-solving

At the end of each workshop, specific tasks were assigned to work groups for discussion at the next workshop. How the groups completed their tasks was up to them but each group was expected to meet at least once between workshops to prepare and discuss their tasks, make arrangements to collect the needed information, and to prepare a summary report for presentation.

### **Community LED Project Selection**

During the third workshop, four working groups developed an initial list of potential community projects and the entire list was presented to the community participants. From this list, the participants selected four projects that would be further examined and developed between the third and fourth workshops.

The initial selection process used during the third workshop was a simple multi-colored dot voting system in which each working group was assigned a color and each participant allowed four votes. After a brief presentation on all projects, participants voted for their top four priorities. The PLEDGE staff then tallied the results to identify the top four project ideas. Each of these ideas was then assigned to a working group for further research with criteria for evaluating the practical realities of implementing the project. Each group then prepared a report of their findings for presentation at the fourth workshop.

### **Project Selection Criteria**

During the fourth workshop, a community vision statement was approved and then the group presented their research findings. The following set of criteria guided project selection:

- **Sustainability:** The project must be sustainable over a period of time after financial support ended.
- **Realistic:** Implementation must be realistic given available resources and municipal conditions.
- **Realistic Results:** The expected results must be achievable given available resources and municipal conditions.
- **Partnerships:** The project must support promotion of partnerships within the municipality.
- **Benefit:** The project must benefit the community, not just one small group or business.

Participants then used the following “traffic light” evaluation method to rate the project according to the set criteria:

- Red indicated that the project should not be selected because it would not provide sufficient benefit to the community, the costs were too high, or that it was not yet ready to be a community project.
- Yellow indicated that a project might be worthwhile but there appeared to be significant issues that required further study.
- Green indicated that a project could be beneficial and should be given consideration for final adoption.

### PHASE TWO: COMMUNITY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Phase 2, generally expected to take 12 months, is the period when a detailed action plan is developed and the selected community project is carried out. A project management team is selected to guide implementation. These teams are comprised of 4 - 6 individuals who have been directly involved in the preparation of the project idea and who have the greatest amount of information about it. The project management team develops an implementation, action, or business plan which is reviewed by PLEDGE’s Advisory Committee to ensure that all necessary steps, costs, and considerations were included.

### **Fund Disbursement**

Each community was provided approximately \$20,000 for project implementation. One collateral loan project in Rousse was provided \$50,000 as part of the Danube River Initiative covered later in this report. Management control of PLEDGE funds included close monitoring and built-in safeguards. Funds were disbursed only upon written request signed by 3 – 5 members of the project management team. Teams were required to detail intended expenditures which were then matched to the implementation budget. In addition, each community was required to establish a separate bank account for their PLEDGE project. While this is standard

practice for USAID’s local grantees, this requirement presented difficulties because “projects” are not legally recognized entities. The teams made alternative arrangements including establishing a legal identity or using a vested organization to open a separate account.

### **PLEDGE Assistance**

Throughout implementation, all teams frequently contacted PLEDGE staff for assistance of various kinds:

- Developing a business plan
- Identifying and obtaining technical experts
- Contacting other potential partners or networks
- Identifying and contacting other funding sources
- Writing letters of support
- Identifying alternative courses of action to resolve obstacles, e.g. cumbersome government procedures

### PHASE THREE: COMMUNITY PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Project completion did not signal the end of the PLEDGE process; rather, community team members identified new donors and additional projects. Thus, a Phase 3 evolved in which communities continued the PLEDGE process independently which provided unanticipated benefits. This open-ended period became the sustainability phase. Following project completion, communities continued to meet to discuss ideas, to share information about emerging results and future plans for the project, to explore additional projects using the PLEDGE process, and to seek other financial support.

### **Community Networking**

PLEDGE supported Phase 3 through quarterly meetings that included project implementation team members and IASs from every community. These forums provided the opportunity to cooperate and collaborate. Participants reviewed problems, activities and accomplishments, received skill building training and learned about other funding sources. As participants shared experiences and offered suggestions and observations, the quarterly meetings became the most important motivational and sustaining tool in the PLEDGE process and established a network for continuing relationships after projects were completed.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND AGGREGATED ANALYSIS

An analysis of PLEDGE projects reflects its application to a broad range of sectors. Of the 54 projects, 24 were in the agricultural sector, 11 infrastructure, 3 manufacturing, 11 service, 2 financial, and 3 tourism.<sup>5</sup> This provides further evidence that the PLEDGE process works not only under diverse community conditions but also in different sectors.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C: Bulgaria LED Projects by Sector

A summary highlighting all 54 LED projects is available at <http://www.w-s-i.net/bulgaria/>. Each of these projects experienced success but three provide excellent, diverse examples of securing other donor resources, community mobilization, private sector involvement, and perseverance in overcoming obstacles. Case studies located at the same website provide more details about the following high-performing projects.

**Dimitrovgrad – Information Center for Development**

8 projects implemented  
190 new jobs opened  
328 people trained  
840 citizens participating  
Increased transparency of local government  
600,000 leva were attracted to the community

Dimitrovgrad’s population is approximately 73,000 and is aging and decreasing as young people leave. The unemployment rate of approximately 15% is growing as industries close or greatly reduce their operation. The Dimitrovgrad economic base has been agriculture and light industry. Prior to PLEDGE there had been no external donors working within the municipality. The goal of this project is to stimulate economic development by supporting small and medium businesses, making available current information on economic and business conditions, and promoting an exchange of information about successful actions. The total budget for the project was \$ 23,412 to support the refurbishment and establishment of the Center’s office. As a direct result of the project three staff jobs were for the center. Indirectly, the project contributed to the creation of additional jobs through assistance provided to other businesses. The Center lobbied the Bulgaria Association of Development Agencies for membership to become eligible for EU funds and was successful in obtaining funding from various donors for eight additional projects.

1. A Social and Labor Consultancy Bureau functioning with the Center has served over 560 visitors, facilitating access of ethnic groups to information on social, legal, and labor issues and improving liaisons between municipal institutions. Through mediation services provided by the Bureau, 30 people were employed with the temporary winter program of the Labor Office.
2. Participated in a project which raised transparency in the work of the municipal administration and limited the conditions for corruption. A hotline and a mailbox were opened for citizen opinions and recommendations to improve administrative services in the community. A brochure Administrative Navigator was published, which described all administrative services, their timeframes, the fees charged, and the documentation required. Eight temporary jobs were created.
3. Prepared 60 five-six year old Roma children for entering first grade to create equal opportunity to education, while experimenting in training children from ethnic groups, who do not attend kindergartens. Eleven jobs were generated and for the first time a

- methodology was applied, based on a curriculum for specialized play schools, adapted for bilingual children.
4. 100 dislocated workers from the mining industry in the town of Merichleri were trained and employed in environmental activities. Municipal sites were reconstructed, the river was cleansed and reinforced, and trees were planted.
  5. 45 civil servants in the local administration were trained in improving the quality of municipal services. Six jobs were opened and a brochure was published, containing all regulations of the Municipal Council.
  6. Several educational youth initiatives increased awareness among students about European integration and the role of Bulgaria in the process. Five jobs were generated with the publication of a brochure, a student newspaper, and the organization of an exhibition.
  7. A joint initiative with the Municipal Council was implemented to develop specialized professional skills among the newly elected 33 councilors. Three training modules created 7 jobs and improved the efficiency and the governance capacity in formulating independent economic policy.
  8. The most ambitious project, however, was an initiative in partnership with the Municipality and the Association for Dissemination of Knowledge to establish a training and production center for the sewing industry. This resulted in the integration of socially disadvantaged citizens, disabled and Roma people. Forty women were trained as seamstresses with 32 currently employed.

Another indicator for the Center's success is the atmosphere of commitment to addressing the problems of ethnic groups and partnership developed between the Center and the municipal institutions in finding solutions to significant public issues.

**Stara Zagora –  
Two New Academic Programs in Regional Planning/Development of Rural Regions and  
Social Work at Trakia University**

Despite overwhelming obstacles, the project indirectly lead to:

- 60 instructor and specialist jobs saved by shifting the University's agricultural focus to one of national importance
- The first and only university listed in the national register of universities offering Regional Planning and Development of Rural Areas,
- 15 full-time and 40 part-time students in the B.A. program
- 30 full-time and 10 part-time students projected for 2004-5.
- 45 students in the M.A. program
- Established University Centre on Regional Development
- Regional Development Alternatives magazine published
- 2 manuals in Quality Management and Accounting published
- 17 jobs created through the Quick Start program
- Bulgarian-German Agrarian College established

Stara Zagora has a population of 173,185 but is experiencing a negative natural growth. The population is aging, with pensioners accounting for approximately 25%. The unemployment rate is about 15.2 % with structural unemployment expected to increase. Major industries are experiencing a loss of markets and the extensive small businesses are experiencing lack of access to information and credit. The infrastructure, particularly the water and sewerage systems are in need of repair. There is a diverse labor pool with highly qualified professionals from Trakia University. The project sought to establish Stara Zagora as a regional academic center of Central and Southeastern Bulgaria. Regional Planning training will meet the requirements for accession into the EU by preparing specialists for all levels of governance by territory. The new academic programs are expected to attract more students to the area and to increase employment at the university through 60-70 new faculty positions with at least as many support staff. PLEDGE provided \$20,000 with Trakia University providing additional facility, qualified instructors, planning and a feasibility study. \$8,150 was used to develop curricula and obtain accreditation. The remainder of the PLEDGE seed-money was used to establish new courses, training materials, and to market new students.

The implementation team was composed of representatives of the University, the Association of Municipalities-Trakia, the Deputy-Chief Prosecutor of Stara Zagora, and a private business person. Although locally based, the IASs were not very supportive and divided the community when the selection process started. Despite this lack of leadership and bureaucratic obstacles the team persevered and achieved the accreditation of two new majors at the end of 2002. This is a unique project that did not bring immediate results but became important for the development of a whole region. Good planning and consistency on the part of the implementation team compensated for the stalemate caused by local elections and IASs turnover. The new academic programs will enhance the university's regional, national and international standing and are expected to guarantee its survival as the number of academic establishments is reduced nationwide. The municipality will become a regional educational center with all economic and demographic advantages arising from that.

### **Dve Mogili – Confectionary Production Expansion**

45 new jobs created

90 jobs saved

15 people trained for a second production line

Over 50 full-time jobs will be created in October 2004 with the opening of a new flour mill built by the company.

Dve Mogili consists of 11 settlements representing 13.1% of the Rousse region with a population of 10,845 people, composed of 20 % Turks and 10% Roma. Most of the industrial enterprises have either closed or operate at reduced capacity creating an average unemployment rate of 31.2%.

While the PLEDGE process went smoothly in Dve Mogili, the first project selected appeared to be unrealistic. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor were unsupportive due to vested interests which created mistrust, divisiveness and disinterest among the team members. PLEDGE facilitated a meeting between the District Governor of Rousse and the Mayor which resulted in assurances that the municipality would provide the necessary conditions for continuation. The community reconsidered the project ideas generated in Workshop C and decided to expand the production capacity of a local candy company. To keep the public informed, the project implementation team issued press releases to the mass media. The team ensured complete transparency and openness in all transactions. PLEDGE's \$20,000 investment was matched by the company several times over.

This project is by far one of the most successful production expansion projects in Bulgaria in terms of job creation, pace, and potential. Community team members' attitudes were transformed from suspicion to collaboration in exercising control over municipal authorities. The company also demonstrated a strong commitment to provide healthful working conditions, unmatched in the municipality. The project's success and the community support that emerged from PLEDGE process attracted additional investment from other companies in the region. Today, Dve Mogili hosts several thriving production companies, one of which received an award from the national government as one of the fastest growing companies in Bulgaria.

## THE QUICK START INVESTMENT

Quick Start training is used as a tool in enterprise adjustment that provides short-term, customized training to workers in new businesses, expanding businesses, or businesses at risk of losing their competitive edge because of outdated equipment, technology, or worker skills and knowledge.

### General Characteristics of Quick Start

- ***Training content is determined in advance of training through a job and task analysis.*** The purpose of the job and task analysis is to focus on the specific tasks and steps performed by the workers on the job. The analysis will separate the "need to know" from the "nice to know."
- ***Performance objectives are stated in observable and measurable terms.*** Objectives are developed directly from the job analysis. The conditions and performance level under which an objective is to be completed is representative of the job.
- ***Trainee achievement is based on performance.*** A trainee is evaluated according to predetermined performance standards rather than by a comparison with other trainees. Performance standards in the classroom are taken directly from the standards required on the job.
- ***Learning is guided by feedback.*** Feedback plays an important part in a QS program. Frequent and immediate feedback is provided to the trainee. The trainee's progress is monitored closely in relation to the stated objectives in order to provide reinforcement and motivation for learning.
- ***Learning time is flexible.*** Time may vary among trainees to accomplish the objectives. Slower trainees may require more time to meet the specified performance standards;

faster trainees, after mastering performance objectives, may continue on to the next objective.

- **Training is individualized.** Opportunity exists to provide for differences among trainees with respect to the objectives they pursue at a given time, the mode or methods of training, and the materials used for learning. Training can be self-paced and learning activities can vary.

### **Quick Start's History in Bulgaria**

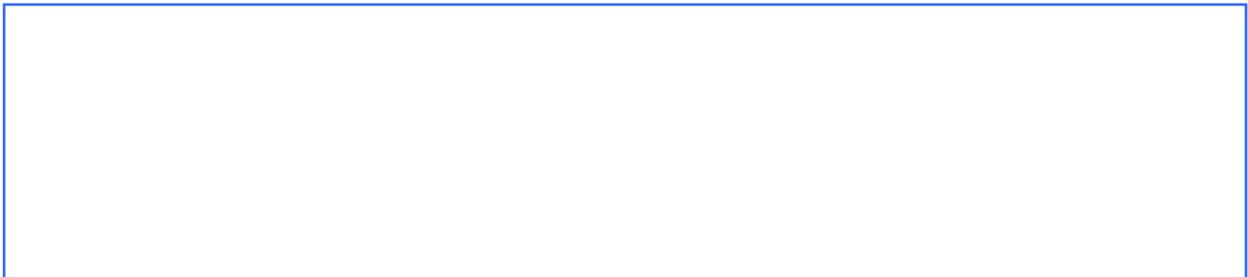
Quick Start was introduced by WSI during 1997 – 1998 on behalf of USDOL as a separate demonstration project in five companies located in Rousse, Bourgas, and Varna.

As PLEDGE was being launched, USDOL decided that Quick Start should be incorporated within PLEDGE and expanded to institutionalize the program within NES. During the first year, Quick Start required significant effort to establish goals, coordinate activities, and monitor results. During the second year, the NES assumed major operational responsibilities and PLEDGE's role shifted to primarily coordination and oversight.

In 2003, building on WSI's success in Macedonia, NES staff and 16 Quick Start Bulgarian trainers received two, one-week training courses on USDOL's O\*NET methodology and its application to Quick Start curriculum development. O\*Net is the latest occupational database used by the ILO and Western labor market specialists. This assistance resulted in the development of an O\*NET manual to replace Bulgaria's outdated occupational coding systems.

### **Quick Start Results**

A final report submitted to USDOL in 1998 details the results achieved in the demonstration project. In terms of sustainability, 140 National Employment Service trainers are assigned to Quick Start implementation and 56 vocational training institutions adopted the technology, assuring the capacity to sustain the program. In addition, 14 new policies or regulations were enacted that supported proactive worker adjustment.



## **PLEDGE: PROGRAM GROWTH AND EXPANSION**

PLEDGE was initially designed as a two-year pilot project. As a result of the pilot's job creation success, USAID provided four more years of funding to expand PLEDGE and enable the demonstration of other economic renewal tools. This expansion enabled PLEDGE to participate in two special initiatives which enriched its program base: 1) the Danube River Initiative (DRI) and 2) the World Bank Social Investment Fund (SIF). Both initiatives chose PLEDGE for its

proven ability to create jobs and build social capital in a diverse range of challenged communities.

### **The Danube River Initiative**

In 2000, the Danube River Initiative (DRI) focused the efforts of seven USAID implementing organizations on Bulgaria's northern tier to mitigate the negative effects of the river embargo during the Kosovo war. Under the DRI umbrella, PLEDGE opened a satellite office in Pleven and hired program staff to implement the PLEDGE process in 10 communities, which became Round 3 of the program.<sup>6</sup>

### **The World Bank Social Investment Fund Initiative**

In 2001, the World Bank approached PLEDGE to partner in a special two-year pilot program, *Building Social Capital in Small Disadvantaged Communities*, in Bulgaria's northeastern tier. The Bank had long been an advocate of PLEDGE's proven ability to develop partnerships at the grassroots level and increase citizen participation in local decisions to improve a community's employment base. For PLEDGE, this partnership provided an opportunity to mainstream its methodologies at the national level, sustaining the program within the Ministry of Labor's SIF project. An agreement between USAID, the World Bank, and USDOL was reached with USAID funding PLEDGE operations and the SIF providing staff support and funding for community projects. Work began in September 2002 and continued through September 2004 to implement the PLEDGE process in 20 communities, which became Rounds 5 & 6 of the program.<sup>7</sup>

### **Economic Clusters and Business Retention/Expansion**

During its final year, PLEDGE expanded support to business development by initiating the first regional tourism cluster in Bulgaria. PLEDGE then phased into active business expansion and development.

PLEDGE selected a tourism cluster and decided to base it in the Smolyan region due to the existing network established by the 1999 community LED project to revive Smolyan's town center and master crafts school by building a craft street to attract tourists. Entrepreneurs had used the region's natural resources to integrate high mountain skiing, fresh water streams, and village tourism with manufacturing of tourist products. Guided by WSI Consultant, Barbara Andreozzi, PLEDGE staff researched the potential for implementing an economic cluster. After a year of training and implementation of the cluster, the region is positioned to become a competitive, year-round tourist destination.

The cluster team developed an asset map describing the interrelationship between suppliers, clients, NGOs, and core industries. They formed an organizational structure, functioning network, and developed a brand, a marketing strategy, and common public relations campaign. A USAID-funded study tour to Sweden provided insight to the potential of Smolyan's regional cluster and motivated public-private sectors to work together. The initiative is widely supported

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<sup>6</sup> A final report containing a detailed description of the Danube River Initiative is available at <http://www.w-s-i.net/bulgaria/>.

<sup>7</sup> A final report containing a detailed description of the Social Investment Fund initiatives is available at <http://www.w-s-i.net/bulgaria/>

both locally and nationally and is in harmony with the national development strategy of Bulgaria’s Ministry of Economy.

Once the cluster was successfully launched, PLEDGE used that base to develop a business survey conducted in 8 municipalities in the Smolyan region. The data from this survey will provide the basis for focusing on specific small business expansion and new business development around product gaps and needs.

## PLEDGE: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

### PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

From the outset PLEDGE operated on the principles of cooperation, collaboration and partnership which required substantial time and resources as PLEDGE staff sought to promote collaboration among international organizations and cooperation among government, business and non-governmental organizations at the national, regional and local levels. This commitment led to the formation of close working relationships with USAID, the Peace Corps, and others projects such as the Firm Level Assistance Group (FLAG), the Foundation for Local Government Reform (FLGR), Catholic Relief Services and the Solidarity Center.

PLEDGE was assigned six organizations as Strategic Partners with two of these designated as Prime Partners. As part of the initial design, collaboration was expected to be mutually beneficial. Partners would assist and support PLEDGE by donating staff, providing information and other resources, establishing and maintaining vital contacts, obtaining technical assistance for the PLEDGE communities, and advising PLEDGE on site and project selection decision. In return, partners would gain exposure throughout the country, increasing their presence in PLEDGE communities. It was also expected that the partners would strengthen their skills in working with municipalities and, in the long term, adapt the PLEDGE approach to other dimensions of their programs. Prime Partners were to provide experts to develop competency in the PLEDGE process to replicate it throughout Bulgaria.

<i>PLEDGE PARTNERS</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, National Employment Service	Prime (Sustaining) Partner – Sustained the Quick Start program. Included some local labor office staff as IAS. Engaged in implementing the World Bank-funded Social Investment Fund program.
Foundation for Local Government Reform (FLGR)	Prime (Sustaining) Partner – Provided IAS.
Local Government Initiative (LGI)	Provided office space and shared administrative support staff.
Regional Associations of Municipalities (RAM)	All six RAMs provided an IAS for 20 hours per week. Facilitated community introductions.

Solidarity Center	Offered IAS after pilot rounds, provided high community exposure and on-going program advocacy.
Bulgarian Association of Regional Development Agencies (BARDA)	Provided IAS.

PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE

The partnership experience during the first year was quite mixed. PLEDGE covered travel costs and other expenses and partners designated one or two staff up to 10 hours per month. However, many of the staff were unable or unwilling to perform assigned responsibilities and did not exhibit commitment to the project.

On an organizational level, the quality and intensity of the relationship varied. A high level of cooperation and collaboration emerged with the LGI project. Staffs of the two projects frequently discussed a wide range of activities and developments, while maintaining distinct project organizations and identities with the public and beneficiaries.

The collaboration with the Ministry of Labor/National Employment Service was particularly good with respect to the Quick Start program. In addition, some local labor office staff served as Industrial Adjustment Specialists (IAS). PLEDGE’s continual striving for partnership later resulted in joint implementation of the SIF program.

PLEDGE and the Solidarity Center exchanged information and ideas on a regular basis and planned for joint Worker Adjustment trainings for unions. Pledge’s Country Director and consultants provided structured worker redeployment training to union mining representatives over the first three years of the program. This collaboration resulted in a strong sustaining partnership. In fact as the program matured, the Solidarity Center and the LGI remained the two most engaged partners at the national level.

As a result of the first year experience trying to develop national level partnerships, PLEDGE shifted to the creation of community-based partnerships with those who benefited directly from contributions within the local communities. This shift to a local level focus became a guiding principle when selecting key community players for PLEDGE projects.

DONOR COORDINATION

A further dimension of PLEDGE’s commitment to cooperation and collaboration was its efforts in convening quarterly meetings of donors engaged in local economic development activities. At a minimum, this effort over time helped establish contact among the donors and encouraged information sharing that eliminated duplication in project plans. After this initial success, USAID wished to target other issues and eliminated donor coordination. If allowed to continue, donor coordination could have been one of the significant project outcomes. Coordination of activities in local communities at the implementation stage continues to be an issue in Bulgaria.

## **PLEDGE: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

### **Advisory Committee**

A committee was established comprised of USAID, FLGR, and LGI. Its role was to guide PLEDGE in overall program direction, community site selection, and issues with selected LED projects. During the first year of operation, the Advisory Committee proved to be of great value. Its contribution was particularly evident in selecting and working with the first group of municipalities and their subsequent LED projects. The Advisory Committee raised questions and provided suggestions about the number and type of municipalities to include. And, when municipalities exhibited difficulty or hesitancy in selecting one specific municipal project, the Advisory Committee provided valuable perspective and helped guide PLEDGE staff in sensitive decisions.

### **Staffing**

PLEDGE was designed with a small staff under the assumption that it would draw on staff from the partner organizations. For the first year, core staff included a WSI project director, a local program coordinator, a driver, and half-time administrative-finance coordinator shared with LGI. WSI consultants, Marion Bentley and Gary Hansen, provided basic training and orientation and local staff from partner organizations functioned as IAS. Local staff were utilized to the maximum extent possible to reinforce that PLEDGE is a Bulgarian program.

The need to start working with at least two groups of communities within a 12 month period placed great demands on staff, requiring intensive personal commitment and extensive travel. PLEDGE is a complex project to implement which required significant time and effort to develop staff capability in a technology that was new to Bulgaria. Developing a thorough knowledge base and the skills to introduce the PLEDGE process and guide others its use required substantial coaching and practice. The selection and development of local staff was made more difficult because roles and performance requirements were evolving. As communities shifted to the second phase of project implementation, staff roles changed from initiator to teacher to mentor and finally to consultant, providing assistance as requested. In addition, as one round of communities moved to phase two, another was beginning phase one. Thus, on any given day throughout the six-year life of the PLEDGE project, staff were required to shift from one role to another, while working through material and concepts that they were still learning.

As the number of communities grew, PLEDGE added three additional local program coordinators. Two were hired to jointly implement and coordinate rounds II and III; the third was hired to coordinate round IV and to provide a more dynamic business element to PLEDGE's capacity. This team approach was maintained for all workshops and LED project implementation which involved managing 12+ communities, providing technical assistance, and monitoring results to assure quality. As a result, each person developed an expertise in areas such as municipal governance, European integration, grants, and business.

### **Administrative Systems**

As staff were being hired and developed, PLEDGE was also creating its administrative procedures and processes. This challenge was eased by co-location with the LGI project. As an established project, LGI was well-placed to provide assistance with numerous administrative and

logistical activities. Due to this close proximity, the two projects created a mutually beneficial and amicable sharing of many administrative functions.

## **OBSERVATIONS, BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Following the pilot round, PLEDGE staff and the Advisory Committee identified some initial observations and lessons which guided implementation in subsequent rounds.

### *1. Find a Key Person in Each Community*

The most important factor for success is one or more key persons who act as catalysts within each community. These natural leaders can be official or unofficial and may come from various sources: an IAS, a Peace Corps volunteer, NGO leaders, a mayor, or a deputy mayor. Individually or collectively, at least one individual must emerge to assume responsibility for the process and completing the work without PLEDGE staff such as organizing meetings, encouraging team members to complete their work, providing logistical or other support to complete tasks, and continue to support the project. In addition, PLEDGE observed that an IAS who provided similar services in more than one community at a time, dramatically increased his or her skills and abilities in implementing the PLEDGE process and their motivation to support the projects. After the pilot round, PLEDGE staff began to seek out natural leaders and secure their involvement, which moved the process along more quickly and smoothly.

### *2. Provide Direction from the Project Office*

During the pilot round, PLEDGE relied on the IAS who had been assigned by a partner organization and provided minimal direction to the municipalities. During community visits and meetings, PLEDGE staff realized that an IAS lacked specific information. An IAS who did not follow through or adequately perform tasks missed indications of a lack of community commitment or the pursuit of special interests until a problem emerged, which delayed work progress. During subsequent rounds, with additional staff, PLEDGE was able to ensure timely direction and monitoring of the project within each community.

### *3. Follow a Selection process for IAS Volunteers*

During the pilot round, a number of IASs did not exhibit a commitment to PLEDGE, to the municipalities, or to the process and goals. This lack of commitment may have been the result of being assigned by their organizations with little or no choice. Some IASs developed dedication asserting that they would have provided better coordination earlier if they had understood its importance. In general, IASs assigned by partner organizations did not provide the quality and coordination needed to create results. IASs that expressed a desire to be involved and that were supported by their leadership were more dedicated and committed. Of course, if a partner offered staff, PLEDGE accepted the person as additional support, but not as key IASs.

After the pilot experience, PLEDGE directly interviewed and selected the community IASs. During Rounds 2-6, PLEDGE selected IASs from a pool of invited experts who

attended the four-day IAS training. This selection helped to assure that the communities had committed and skilled support for the duration.

4. *IAS Must Live Near Community*

All IASs must live in or near the community implementing the PLEDGE process to provide the necessary on-site coordination and support. This also builds local capacity within each community as opposed to building a national partner's capacity.

5. *Anticipate External Events*

The pilot round was affected by local elections in the fall and winter of 1999 which changed leadership in eight of the nine pilot sites. In a few cases, a new mayor or deputy mayor was unwilling to support or actively opposed the PLEDGE project because it was perceived as a predecessor's project. For the remaining five years of implementation, PLEDGE staff anticipated elections and other external demands and accommodated events by adjusting start-up times, selecting more IASs from certain communities, and adding additional trainings.

6. *Create a Project Ballot*

In the pilot round, community teams were unable or unwilling to select only one community project, expecting PLEDGE to select for them between two projects. In addition, subgroups attempted to manipulate project selection by rearranging membership on the project research teams or reconstituting work groups that had been working together for several months. In some instances, local political leaders lobbied hard for a project which would primarily benefit a personal friend's failing business. One community was focused from the outset on a specific project and could not be swayed.<sup>8</sup>

To address these issues, PLEDGE tried convening special workshops to assist the communities in coming to a consensus and even convened the Advisory Committee who recommended that PLEDGE make the decision on behalf of each municipality. To avoid such events in subsequent rounds, WSI consultants designed a ballot that was transparent, could not be manipulated, and followed project selection guidelines. The ballot guides each team member to rank projects based on 47 selection criteria which are scored on a scale of one-to-five. The project with the highest total from all voting becomes the selected project. The "traffic light" dot system was retained for narrowing all project ideas to the best four. Community teams then used the project selection guidelines to research data and present their findings.

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<sup>8</sup> See Mineralni Bani Case Study at <http://www.w-s-i.net/bulgaria/> for details and lessons learned on community project selection.

## 7. Build Trust

Early in each round, PLEDGE staff sensed a lack of trust among the community participants. There was a reluctance to participate in meetings and workshops and to complete work assignments. The process was not valued; developing community capacity was not a perceived benefit of participation. PLEDGE experienced difficulty in motivating both IASs and community members and convincing them that something positive could result from the process. In each round during the first workshop, someone would always say, “just give us the money; we know what to do” or “why waste all this time in meetings for such a small amount of money?”

*“What is valuable is that I can see in practice how different structures, different organizations, different members of society can work together, nurture the problems of the community and find alternative solutions.”*

Silvia Miloslavovoa, IAS, Vidin

Building trust was a challenge in each and every community and was earned only after two or three months of work. An understanding developed over time that results are achieved by using good data, preparing a good design, and organizing decisions in an open and transparent manner. Indications of this shift included laughter during the sessions, comments overheard about PLEDGE’s potential, , and taking responsibility and initiative for the work.

After the pilot round, these attitudinal barriers lessened to some degree, but never dissipated, as word of PLEDGE’s results spread throughout the country and as stakeholders expressed enthusiasm. In addition, PLEDGE was able to more quickly obtain IASs with high interest in the program who in turn provided better support to community projects which created quicker and stronger results.

## 8. Use Bulgarian Experiences

A benefit of multiple rounds and a longer term project was having real Bulgarian examples to share, both in the trainings and with stakeholders. Participants began to network and seek out their natural partners which enabled them to gain knowledge more quickly and to access new funding and other project stakeholders. Successful IASs became speakers at donor or community seminars and became advocates within national organizations.

## 9. Provide Adequate Time

Starting each community is difficult at first because everyone -- the donors, the stakeholders and the community participants -- want instant results. Donors, in general, did not acknowledge the time required to change attitudes.

Also, although communities were trained in rounds and started work at the same time, they did not progress at the same rate. For example, project implementation plans were to be completed within 30 days but some communities lacked capacity, knowledge or leadership. Though rare, a selected project did not survive the action planning stage and the community had to reconvene to select the next best project which would lead to other

adjustments, such as the loss of a key individual. In other instances, the team requested an expedited implementation plan to take advantage of that year's growing season rather than wait another year.

Time is required to prepare communities, build trust, and to create results. There was a noticeable shift in community attitudes and support after approximately three months as participants began to understand their importance and role as community decision-makers. PLEDGE built trust by coming back to communities for follow-on work and allowing time for adaptations which improved results and developed local capacity.

Time is required to adapt program design and implementation following a demonstration round. USAID, after visiting workshop sessions, became strong advocates which proved to be an invaluable source of credibility, guidance and support as the program expanded and deepened.

#### *10. Unrealistic Expectations within Municipalities*

Within every community, PLEDGE encountered unrealistic expectations about what donors can and will provide in terms of assistance and amounts of money and about the value or potential of tourism or other economic and income generating activities. Municipalities tend to wait for some external authority to solve community problems and provide for its needs. There was a broad lack of willingness to accept responsibility and take action to address community situations. A lack of cooperation among community groups is a net result. Providing services to people is not a strongly held or a widely accepted need among citizens. Partnerships among business, government and community groups, where they exist, are not strongly established. There is a lack of coordination and cooperation among these groups even to provide information about current or future activities. Bribes become a part of the normal business practice and culture.

#### *11. Sustainability Must be a Flexible Evolving Process*

Three different paths toward sustainability were attempted over the life of the project demonstrating that sustainability of a pilot requires a flexible, evolving process.

- 1) USAID determined that one of PLEDGE's prime partners would be the Foundation for Local Government Reform and that it should sustain the PLEDGE process. Pilot rounds were organized to accommodate building FLGR's capacity and positioning it in a key role. After the pilot phase, it became clear that FLGR lacked the capability to focus on community economic development to the degree the methodology required.
- 2) PLEDGE's Project Director then began to adapt the sustainability strategy around the IAS network and sought out other partners. However, because no one organization could assume responsibility for the overall program, this approach was discarded in favor of developing capacity at the community level.
- 3) During the fourth year, the World Bank offered sustainability through integration of the PLEDGE process within its SIF program. All parties agreed that PLEDGE would be institutionalized and integrated into the SIF program by absorbing four PLEDGE staff positions into SIF by September 2004 to assure continued program institutionalization after PLEDGE closed. From the beginning, PLEDGE worked to

involve the MOLSP SIF in program activities to achieve cross-fertilization in skills and practices. A cooperative partnership was anticipated to be the seedbed for institutionalization and sustainability of the type of assistance implemented by PLEDGE that will be required as Bulgaria's restructuring and privatization continues. Within the first year, it became clear there was either a misunderstanding about this arrangement or lack of will within the MOLSP to implement it. The World Bank moved from being an initiator and supporter to silent monitoring. As a result, this sustainability path did not materialize either.

## SUSTAINABILITY

During the first quarter of 2004, external consultants developed a feasibility and strategic framework for formation and development of an NGO, including deadlines and actions for research to be completed in the first quarter of 2004. From May through July, the USAID CTO participated in discussions about the NGO's formation and how USAID support could assure its success.

*PLEDGE Partners* was formed in July 2004. Two key PLEDGE staff led its management team. The NGO draws on the extensive network of IAS and institutions created throughout Bulgaria and will continue to expand PLEDGE's unique economic development methodology and further the creation of competitive public-private industry clusters in regions and communities.

USAID has donated office equipment and provided one year of free office space and will encourage sub grants and contracts to assure *PLEDGE Partner's* growth and development. In addition, USAID/Bulgaria's Mission Director met with the NGO leadership in September to assure them that the mission would continue to promote PLEDGE's work. The first week in November, *PLEDGE Partners*, with the public support of USAID, will promote the regional tourism cluster during a visit by the Bulgarian Prime Minister. This is an excellent opportunity to publicly launch the NGO. The cluster and business expansion activity will continue with USAID's support over the course of the next year.

## FUNDING

PLEDGE was implemented over a six year period with total funding<sup>9</sup> of \$4,370,731. Community LED projects were funded at approximately \$20,000 with the exception of one collateral fund project funded under the Danube River Initiative project at \$50,000.

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9 Appendix C: USDOL Task Order Funding provides a detailed breakdown of funding received for the PLEDGE project.

A breakdown of project expenses follows:

- \$725,121 Thirty-four LED Projects<sup>10</sup> (with \$1,167,710 in matching contributions)
- \$1,974,629 Training Costs
- \$1,670,981 Program Administrative Costs

These numbers underscore the cost effectiveness of a program that, in a six year period, created 5,251 jobs, saved 941 jobs, and institutionalized a process that will endure long after the PLEDGE program ended.

## CONCLUSION

Although other programs have provided greater amounts of money to communities, PLEDGE out-performed these programs in terms of results, transparency, and sustainability.

*An article published in the Sofia media reported the following:*

*“The number of PLEDGE projects financed by the SIF will reach 130 by the end of the year. These projects are worth 14 million leva and are expected to create 2,000 jobs. A comparison with the JDSF program shows that only \$300,000 was invested for creation of community capacity, yet that tiny amount created many economic indicators, including over 300 jobs.”*

The PLEDGE program has had a very strong, positive impact in Bulgaria. The network of local partners includes more than 3,300 Bulgarians who have participated in structured activities to bring economic renewal to 54 communities. The number of beneficiaries is uncountable. It includes people who have benefited from training or economic development but future beneficiaries are harder to identify. The PLEDGE methodology has been thoroughly adopted into the fabric of local life. With this start from PLEDGE, Bulgaria will continue to shape policies that support community driven development to fill the gaps where markets are imperfect or lacking or where public institutions or local governments fail to fulfill their mandates.

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<sup>10</sup> SIF provided an additional \$300,000 to fund its 20 community projects at \$15,000 per community.

## APPENDICES

- A. PLEDGE Final Performance Data – September 30, 2004
- B. WSI's Integrated Community Adjustment Model
- C. Bulgaria LED Projects by Sector
- D. USDOL PLEDGE Task Order Funding

APPENDIX A: PLEDGE FINAL PMP TABLE

PLEDGE Bulgaria Performance Data Table - 30 September 2004

Indicator		S1 99	S2 99	S1 00	S2 00	S1 01	S2 01	S1 02	S2 02	S1 03	S2 03	S1 04	S2 04	TOTAL
<b>DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE: INCREASED EMPLOYMENT OF WORKFORCE IN TARGET AREAS</b>														
1 1 Permanent jobs created	LED				168	366	1231	66	161	262	99	97	435	2885
	QS			12	307		344		54	8				725
	Total			12	475	366	1575	66	215	270	99	97	435	3610
1 2 Temporary jobs created	LED								784	413	133	82	187	1599
	QS								42					42
	WA													
Total								826	413	133	82	187	1641	
<b>Total jobs</b>				<b>12</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>1575</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>179</b>		<b>5251</b>
2 Number of at risk jobs retained	LED						6		70	151	35	35	267	564
	QS				231		25		15	6				277
	WA	100												100
Total	100				231		31		85	157	35	35	267	941
<b>Immediate Objective 1: Increased business sector activity in target areas</b>														
1 1 1 Number of new business starts	LED				4	39	19	1	25	45	21		34	188
1 1 2 Number of new NGOs	LED								14	11	8	9	17	59
1 2 Number/percent of firms assisted that expanded business over past year	#/% Directly Assisted				3	31	27	6	13	14		21	48	163
	#/% Bus Center Assisted				3	16	30	2	31	4	12	4	12	114
	#/% QS Assisted			1	1	1	2			1				6
	Total			1	11	87	78	9	44	19	12		60	283

### PLEDGE Bulgaria Performance Data Table - 30 September 2004

Indicator		S1 99	S2 99	S1 00	S2 00	S1 01	S2 01	S1 02	S2 02	S1 03	S2 03	S1 04	S2 04	TOTAL
<b>Sub Immediate Objective 1: Increased capacity of target areas to identify and pursue post-project LED opportunities</b>														
I 1 1 Number/percent of LED communities with continuing fora for LED	Number of communities - 54				35	35	35	35	35	33	44	52	52	52
	Percent of communities				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%	98%	96%	96%	97%
I 1 2: Number of new projects funded	Local private investors					6	5		3	3	4	4	7	32
	International donors				3	7	18	2	8	9	20	13	19	99
	GOR at any level					21	22		84	12	2	7	14	162
	Total				3	34	45	2	95	24	26	24	40	293
I 1 3 Number/percent LED communities with new projects funded	Number of communities				3	8	13	4	10	11	10	8	17	84
	Percent of communities				10%	27%	45%	13%	34%	21%	29%	14.81%	31.48%	24%
I 1 4 Number of projects	LED								208	232	268	276	316	316
<b>Comment: 97% represents the minimum percentage of communities with continuing LED fora at a time. 24% represents the average percentage of communities with new projects funded.</b>														
<b>Output 1.a: Citizens, IAS and community action teams trained in LED model and their respective roles in implementation</b>														
I a 1 Number of citizens participating in LED training	Number of citizens			1562						328	334	55	250	2529
I a 2 Number/percent of IAS and community action team members trained in LED implementation and monitoring	Number/percent of IAS			79/63%	64/51%	62/49%	61/48%		41/71%	51/93%	53/94%	58/96%	58/96%	58/73%
	Number/percent of team members			39/22%	54/30%	53/30%	59/33%		40/23%					49/28%
	Total			1680	118	115	120		81	379	387	113	308	3,301
<b>Comment: The figures across the semesters columns reflect that up to S102, IAS and teams members were from 34 communities. Training for the final 20 SIF communities started in S103. For the 54 sites, there were a total of 312 IAS and 351 action team members.</b>														

**PLEDGE Bulgaria Performance Data Table - 30 September 2004**

Indicator	S1 99	S2 99	S1 00	S2 00	S1 01	S2 01	S1 02	S2 02	S1 03	S2 03	S1 04	S2 04	TOTAL
<b>Sub Immediate Objective 2: Improved production and/or management in targeted firms or areas</b>													
1 2 1 Number/percent of existing firms assisted that implement new production and/or management processes	LED			1		1		5	15	5		89	116
	QS				1			1	2				4
	Total			1	1	1		6	17				89
1 2 2 Number decarees of fallow land reclaimed	Total			40,165	3037	85,680	20	25	100	387	490	840	130,744
<b>Output 2.a: Provision of business support services to firms in target communities</b>													
2 a 1 Number of existing firms assisted directly or indirectly under LED/QS	LED			12	21	62		151	92	386	55	89	868
	QS			1	1	1		6	2				12
	Total			1	13	22		157	94	386	55	89	880
<b>Sub Immediate Objective 3: Improved business climate in target areas</b>													
1 3 1 Number of project-related local level business climate improvements	Financial					1		89	19	9	5	12	135
	Legal/regulatory					1		9	99	6		4	119
	Physical infrastructure				4	4	3		12	7	7	18	55
	Services infrastructure				104	55	33	1	31	42	43	9	325
	Total				108	60	37	1	129	172	65	19	43

PLEDGE Bulgaria Performance Data Table - 30 September 2004

Indicator	S1 99	S2 99	S1 00	S2 00	S1 01	S2 01	S1 02	S2 02	S1 03	S2 03	S1 04	S2 04	TOTAL
<b>Sub Immediate Objective 6: Maintain or strengthen local partnerships for LED opportunities</b>													
1 6 1 Number of LED partners per project type	Agriculture			22	28	3	20	14	38	46	80	94	345
	Infrastructure			48	27	49	18	28	127	16	23	27	363
	Business Centers			22	57			96	49	19	12	28	283
	Miscellaneous				11			11	3	26	3	7	61
	Total			92	123	52	38	149	217	107	118	156	1052
<b>Comments: 998 inter-industry partnerships were also created.</b>													
1 6 2 Number of communities whose partners contribute a threshold level of contributions toward LED project cost	Number of communities - 54			6	14	10	8	10	27	16	15	26	54
	% of communities			21%	48%	34%	28%	34%	79%	36%	28%	48%	39%
<b>Comments: 39% represents the average percentage of communities whose partners contributed a threshold level of contributions toward LED project cost.</b>													
<b>Immediate Objective 2: Increased worker access to and participation in active measures programs in target areas</b>													
2 1 Number of target workers participating in active measures programs (QS) in target areas	Number of workers		164	99	95	40	465	123	197	13			1196
2 2 Number/percent of firms receiving active measures services	Number/percent of firms		12/33	4/15	4/15	4/10	36/90	3/100	6/54	2/100			71/38%
2 3 Number/percent of training institutes that adopt QS training technology	Number/percent of training institutes -- 56 trained				6/10	4/7		4/6	1/2				15/25%

### PLEDGE Bulgaria Performance Data Table - 30 September 2004

Indicator		S1 99	S2 99	S1 00	S2 00	S1 01	S2 01	S1 02	S2 02	S1 03	S2 03	S1 04	S2 04	TOTAL
<b>Output 2.A: National Employment Services trainers and training institute instructors trained in Quick Start and their roles in implementation</b>														
2 A1 Number of trainers trained	NES trainers		16		122	45					23			206
	Training Institute instructors				60					2				62
	Trade Union Experts	40					26							66
	Total	40	16		182	45	26			2	23			334
<b>Comments: 45 out of 122 initially trained NES representatives were provided additional training.</b>														
<b>Immediate Objective 3: Institutionalization of worker adjustment programs in target areas</b>														
3 1 Number of public/ private institutions which assume responsibility for implementing worker adjustment components	LED				-									
	QS	1			58	1				1				61
	Total	1			58	1				1				61
3 2 Number of trained and designated staff assigned to worker adjustment components	LED													
	QS		16		122					2				140
	Total		16		122					2				140
3 3 Number of new policies or regulations proposed/subsequently enacted that support proactive worker adjustment	Number		5				1	5	2	1				14
<b>Comments: 16 national and 122 local NES reps. were trained and afterwards assigned to worker adjustment components.</b>														

PLEDGE Bulgaria Performance Data Table - 30 September 2004

Indicator		S1 99	S2 99	S1 00	S2 00	S1 01	S2 01	S1 02	S2 02	S1 03	S2 03	S1 04	S2 04	TOTAL
<b>Sub Immediate Objective 4: Demonstrated efficiency in delivery of improved worker adjustment programs (pilots)</b>														
4 1 1 Cost per job created as compared to other program standards	LED			498 USD	440 USD	440 USD	440 USD	440 USD	285 USD					
	QS									200 USD				
<b>Comments: Estimated by the Government of Bulgaria.</b>														
<b>Sub Immediate Objective 5: Increased partner and community awareness of and responsibility for proactive pursuit of economic opportunity</b>														
5 1 Percent of survey respondents reporting increased awareness of worker adjustment components	Percent (Disaggregated by target partner groups to be determined in survey design)													
5 2 Percent of LED community members who believe they can contribute to economic renewal	Percent										89%	91%	93%	
5 3 Percent of employers implementing QS who believe this approach to training enhances competitiveness	Percent									100%			100%	
<b>Comments: The NES conducted these surveys but have not yet evaluated them.</b>														

### PLEDGE Bulgaria Performance Data Table - 30 September 2004

Indicator		S1 99	S2 99	S1 00	S2 00	S1 01	S2 01	S1 02	S2 02	S1 03	S2 03	S1 04	S2 04	TOTAL
<b>Output 5.a: Pledge advocacy action plan operational</b>														
5 a 1	Number										8	2	6	16
	Number/percent of planned actions completed										100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Output 5.b: Partners trained in advocacy</b>														
5 b 1	Number of participants trained													
	Partners										0	0	29	29
	IAS										51	67	140	258
	Community action teams										58	81	110	249
	Total										109	148	279	536

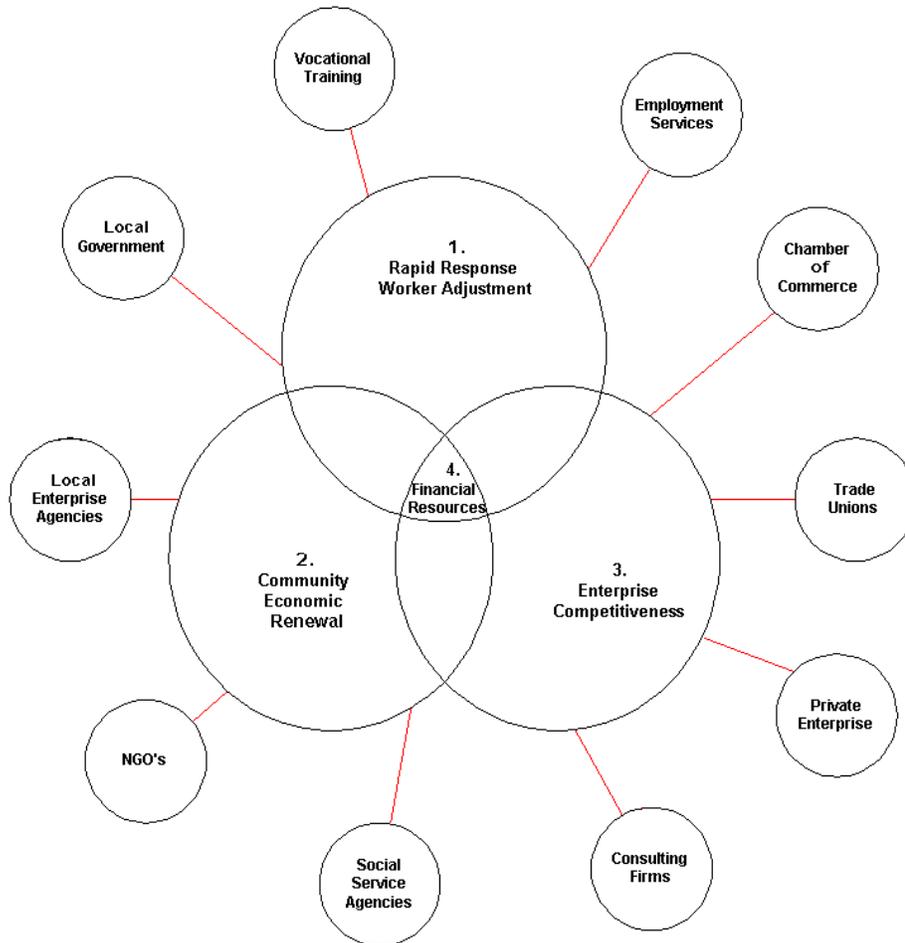
**Notes:**

- 1 For further detail on data collection methods, etc , please see the Pledge Bulgaria Performance Monitoring Plan
- 2 In Data columns, year refers to US Government fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) “S1” and S2” refer to first and second semesters of the year
- 3 Some communities have launched more than one new project during the different semesters

## APPENDIX B: WORLDWIDE STRATEGIES, INC.'S INTEGRATED COMMUNITY ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

WSI's worker, enterprise, and community adjustment model, developed with funding provided by USDOL, is comprised of the following four components:

- I. *Rapid Response Worker Adjustment Component* to plan, organize and facilitate the transition of workers to new jobs;
- II. *Community Economic Renewal Component* to stimulate local economic development efforts and generate new jobs in communities;
- III. *Enterprise Competitiveness Component* to strengthen surviving enterprises and preserve jobs; and
- IV. *Financial Resources Component* to provide funds to implement the worker, community and enterprise adjustment components.



**APPENDIX C: BULGARIA LED PROJECTS BY SECTOR**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Bulgaria SITE</b>	<b>JOBS</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>			
Production	16	Silistra, Slivo Pole, Chuprene, Ruzhintsi, Aksakovo, Suvorovo, Vents, Samuil, Varbitsa, Alfatar, Krushari, Hitino, Dalgopol, Kaolinovo, Provadia, Tervel	
Processing	8	Rakitovo, Topolovgrad, Vulchedrum, Lom, Berkovitsa, Belene, Novi Pazar, Valchi Dol	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>24</b>		<b>2989</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
Building	4	Chiprovtsi, Shabla, Omurtag, Zavet	
Construction	6	Nova Zagora, Isperih, Kubrat, Antonovo, Popovo, General Toshevo	
Draining and Irrigation	1	Svishtov	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>867</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>			
Direct production	3	Dve Mogili, Targovishte, Nikola Kozlevo	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>255</b>
<b>Service</b>			
SME Centers	5	Nikolaevo, Dimitrovgrad, Karlovo, Belogradchik, Sitovo	
Schools/Training Centers	1	Stara Zagora	
Telecommunications	3	Zavet, Borovo, Mineralni Bani	
Agricultural Services	2	Vidin, Pleven	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>834</b>
<b>Financial</b>			
Micro Credit	1	Veliki Preslav	
Collateral Loan Funds	1	Rousse	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>124</b>
<b>Tourism</b>			
Service provision	2	Smolyan, Kavarna	
Infrastructure	1	Vratsa	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>182</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b># 54</b>		<b>JOBS 5251</b>

**APPENDIX D: USDOL PLEDGE TASK ORDER FUNDING**

**USDOL PLEDGE TASK ORDER FUNDING (WSI Contracts J-9-K-7-0020 & J-9-K-0-0050)**

TASK ORDER OBLIGATIONS: FY 1998 TO FY 2004

TASK ORDERS:	OPS DATED YR/MO/D	APPROPRIATION CODE FOR INVOICE PAYMENTS	CONTRACT MODIFICATION \$\$\$ VALUE	NO-COST CONTRACT MODS.	PROJECT OFFICER
52 BUL-ALL-02-01	04-11-10	04-K400-RZAP-2541-73611-TW0	(\$51,626.12)	De-obligation	JRUDE
51 BUL-ALL-02-01	04-05-21	04-K400-RZAP-2541-73611-TW0	\$350,000.00		JRUDE
50 BUL-ALL-02-01	03-06-06	03-K400-RZAP-2541-73611-TW0	\$193,709.83		JRUDE
49 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	03-01-27	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$960,149.73	Re-obligation	JRUDE
48 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	02-11-22	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
47 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	02-11-22	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
46 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	02-09-03	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	(\$960,149.73)	De-obligation	JRUDE
45 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	02-06-18	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
44 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	02-06-18	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$823,649.85		JRUDE
43 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	02-04-08	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
42 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	02-03-28	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$814,985.61		JRUDE
41 BUL-ALL-02-01/M	02-01-15	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
40 BUL-ALL-02-01	01-12-06	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
39 BUL-ALL-02-01	01-11-23	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$250,000.00		JRUDE
38 BUL-TAM-01-001/M	01-11-23	02-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$22,083.02		JRUDE
37 BUL-LED-01-01/M	01-11-01	01-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
36 BUL-LED-01-01/M	01-09-26	01-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
35 BUL-TAM-01-001/M	01-09-26	01-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
34 BUL-LED-01-01	01-07-27	01-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
33 BUL-LED-01-01/M	01-06-26	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
32 BUL-TAM-01-001/M	01-05-14	01-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$233,382.16		JRUDE
31 BUL-LED-01-01	01-05-10	01-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
30 BUL-LED-99-001/M	01-05-10	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	TESQUIBEL
29 BUL-LED-01-01	01-01-29	01-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$289,146.21		JRUDE
28 BUL-TAM-01-01	01-01-29	01-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$162,948.37		JRUDE
27 BUL-LED-99-001/M3	00-12-04	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	L.BUFFO
26 BUL-CD-98-0001/M	00-09-11	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$148,544.34		L.BUFFO
25 BUL-CRP-99-001/M	00-08-31	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	L.BUFFO
24 BUL-LED-99-001/M	00-08-31	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	L.BUFFO
23 BUL-CD-98-0002/M	00-04-25	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	L.BUFFO
22 BUL-LED-99-001/M6	00-04-25	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	JRUDE
21 BUL-LED-99-001/M5	00-03-09	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	L.BUFFO
20 BUL-CD-98-0001/M	00-02-14	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$185,786.87		L.BUFFO
19 BUL-LED-99-001/M4	00-02-14	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	L.BUFFO
18 BUL-CD-98-0002/M	00-01-10	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$50,116.48		L.BUFFO
17 BUL-CRP-99-001	99-12-14	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$80,095.20		L.BUFFO
16 BUL-LED-99-001/M2	99-11-23	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	L.BUFFO
15 BUL-CD-98-0001/M	99-11-17	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$136,016.70		S. SMITH
14 BUL-LED-99-001	99-11-03	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0	\$180,000.00		L.BUFFO
13 BUL-LED-99-001/M1	99-11-03	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	L.BUFFO
12 BUL-LED-99-001/M	99-11-01	00-K400-RZAP-2599-73611-TW0		No Cost Modification	TESQUIBEL
11 BUL-CD-98-0001	99-09-27	K400-\$-9-RZAP-73611-2599-TW0	\$47,953.30		S. SMITH
10 BUL-CD-98-0002/M	99-09-27	K400-\$-9-RZAP-73611-2599-TW0		No Cost Modification	S. SMITH
9 BUL-CD-98-0002/M	99-06-18	K400-\$-9-RZAP-73611-2599-TW0	\$42,075.59		S. SMITH
8 BUL-CD-98-0001/M	99-06-14	K400-\$-9-RZAP-73611-2599-TW0		No Cost Modification	S. SMITH
7 BUL-CD-98-0002/M	99-05-19	K400-\$-9-RZAP-73611-2599-TW0		No Cost Modification	S. SMITH
6 BUL-CD-98-0001/M	99-02-16	K400-\$-9-RZAP-73611-2599-TW0	\$92,876.00		S. SMITH
5 BUL-CD-98-0002/M	99-02-03	K400-\$-9-RZAP-73611-2599-TW0		No Cost Modification	S. SMITH
4 BUL-CD-98-0002/M	98-11-03	K400-\$-8-RZAP-73511-2599-TW0		No Cost Modification	S. SMITH
3 BUL-CD-98-0001/M	98-10-07	K400-\$-8-RZAP-73511-2599-TW0	\$159,095.20		S. SMITH
2 BUL-CD-98-0002	98-09-09	K400-\$-8-RZAP-73511-2599-TW0	\$99,704.64		S. SMITH
1 BUL-CD-98-0001	98-07-27	K400-\$-8-RZAP-73511-2599-TW0	\$60,188.00		S. SMITH
			<b>\$4,370,731.25</b>		