

## **183-0420: Cross-cutting Programs**

### **Performance goal:**

**Strategic & Special Objective Closeout Report: USAID/Bulgaria**

### **Table of Contents**

Key Data Points

Background

Summary of Overall Impact

Summary of Activities

- Participant Training Program
- East Central European Scholarship Program
- AUBG – Improved Capacity of Higher Education to Contribute to Development
- Media Freedom, Anti-corruption and Media Training programs
- Biodiversity /Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the National Eco-trust Fund (NTEF)
- Water and Wastewater Quality Management
- Emergency Humanitarian Assistance
- Bulgaria Fund
- Program Development and Support Fund

Lessons Learned

USAID Reports and Assessments

Key Contacts

## Strategic Objective Close-out Report

**SO Name:** Cross-cutting programs

**SO Number:** 4.2

**Approval Date:** 1998

**Geographic Area:** Bulgaria

**Total Cost:** \$ 95,905,000

**USAID:** \$ 95,905,000

**Mission Funding** \$ 62,884,000

**Global Support**

**Total USAID Funding** \$ 95,905,000

### Principle Implementing Partners:

World Learning Inc.

Georgetown University Center for Intercultural Education and Development<sup>1</sup>

American University of Bulgaria (AUBG)<sup>2</sup>

Broadcast Training Center (BTC)

National Trust Eco-Fund

Delaware Community College

Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Projects (WHO, DAI, CARE, ECIP Foundation)

German Marshal Fund of the U.S.

### Major Counterparts:

Government of Bulgaria

NGOs

Private Businesses (Bulgarian and American)

### Background

The Cross-Cutting Initiatives implemented under this Strategic Objective (SO) have substantially contributed to the achievements of the entire Mission's portfolio through training programs and various development and support activities that helped the successful launch, implementation, and completion of Mission's programs. During the last five years, the Cross-Cutting SO became the home of several activities from previously closed-out SOs, which still had the potential to make impact in their reform areas (e.g. health finance reform, media training and anti-corruption, support for biodiversity, humanitarian aid etc.)

The evolution of the Cross-cutting has resulted in substantial expansion of its scope, mirroring

---

<sup>1</sup> No funding data available

<sup>2</sup> AUBG and BTC funding included in this SO covers the period after FY 2003

the growing support needs of the Mission's portfolio. The backbone of the Cross-cutting SO was the training portfolio and the Audit, Evaluation and Project Support Fund activities. The training programs were instrumental for the success of the technical assistance USAID provided to Bulgaria by investing in the human capital, thus facilitating personal professional and institutional development. Over the years, the training programs evolved from individual trainings for businesses or civil society leaders into group tailored training interventions for mixed groups of reform stakeholders. The locations of the training programs also expanded from primarily U.S.-based to worldwide and predominantly EU locations with the approaching EU accession.

The Audit Evaluation and Support Fund (AEPS) was created in 1995 to respond to the needs for technical expertise in project management and more informed decision making process through funding of program designs, studies and impact evaluations. In 2001 the AEPS fund was renamed into Program Design and Support (PDS) Fund and the scope of the PDS greatly expanded to incorporate targeted reviews, workshops, consultancies, publications and PR activities. The PDS fund doubled in amount and in the last years the program support share of PDS accounted for 85% of the PDS funds utilized annually.

In the process of development of the Graduation Strategy, the Cross-Cutting SO was further expanded to include other initiatives considered to have cross-cutting impact and contributions to all Mission SOs, and which had remained homeless after the close-out of several SOs. Examples of such activities are the Media Training and anti-corruption program, the health financing project, biodiversity legacy institutional strengthening, water and wastewater management program, etc. While the majority of the funding for these activities has been already attributed to several of the closed-out SOs, the reason for including them in this report is capturing their overall achievements and contribution to USAID's mission in Bulgaria.

In the last year of Mission operations, the Cross-Cutting SO was further expanded with the addition of the Bulgaria Fund as the short-term legacy support mechanism designed by the Mission to provide continuing support for local institutions working on priority reform issues. All Cross-cutting initiatives were completed and closed at the time of closing of the SO with the exception of the Bulgaria Fund and the Cooperative Agreement with AUBG, which continue through September 2010 and July 2012 respectively.

**Performance Goal:** Bulgaria is a country with a more energetic society, i.e. increased NGO advocacy, more jobs, more optimism, more widely shared economic gains, and stronger and more reliable international partnerships

### **Summary of overall impact**

The Cross-Cutting objective was designed to offer efficient and effective support to the entire Mission portfolio. Thus, from its very inception, the cross-cutting Strategic Objective (SO) provided access for all programs to a cost efficient mechanism for training, including study tours outside of Bulgaria, addressed program impact through improved project preparation, evaluation,

and monitoring studies and evaluations, and assisted with various administrative support services. Broadly speaking we can summarize the Cross-cutting SO as containing two major groups of initiatives: 1) activities support the Mission's whole portfolio - the Media and Participant Training programs and the Program Development and Support activity; and 2) special initiatives that do not fit with the final three strategic objectives of USAID/Bulgaria, but relate to previously closed SOs from the Mission portfolio. These programs provided significant added value to the achievement of the development goals of the Mission.

### **Summary of activities used to achieve the SO and their major outputs:**

#### *Training Programs*

USAID sponsored two special training programs to invest in building the human capacity and staff experience of indigenous institutions and organizations, particularly those actively participating in USAID's assistance portfolio: World Learning's Participant Training Program, and the Georgetown's East Central European Scholarship Program. These initiatives equipped a broad range of Bulgarian leaders and professionals with skills and practical knowledge to develop democratic processes, free enterprise, market economics, and improved quality of life.

#### *Participant Training Program*

*Implementer: World Learning*

USAID provided short-term training to over 3,500 Bulgarians during the lifetime of its \$17.55 million Participant Training Program (1993-2007). Most people were trained in the U.S. and third countries, although a small number benefited from training in Bulgaria as well. Through consecutive Task Orders issued under various centrally-managed Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs), the E&E Bureau administered a Europe region-wide Participant Training Project which included Bulgaria starting with Partners for International Education and Training (PIET) in 1993, moving to Global Training for Development (GTD) in 1996 and then finally finishing under Strategic Technical Assistance for Results and Training (START). Under various IQC names, Participant Training in Bulgaria was always implemented by World Learning.

World Learning's Participant Training Program in Bulgaria evolved over its lifetime, adapting to the Mission's and Bulgaria's needs. In the early years, most participants traveled to the U.S. for training, while in later years, as Bulgaria moved closer to EU membership, participants were mostly trained in European countries. For example, in 2000-2001, World Learning organized 50 trainings in the U.S. for 159 participants, and 19 programs in third countries for 95 participants. By 2004-2005, World Learning organized only 5 programs in the U.S. involving 35 participants, while training 167 participants in third countries under 16 different programs. In the final years of the program, most trainings were conducted in-country utilizing the newly-developed local training capacity. A new element of the project was offering trainings to groups from other countries in the region.

In the early years, a large number of the programs organized by World Learning were for individual leaders and potential leaders; later there were only group programs. This change in

approach coincided with the shift in USAID's overall programmatic approach from "targets of opportunity" in the early days to more focused, tailored assistance programs. Group programs allowed for a broad array of stakeholders to witness U.S. and third country approaches to a problem, thus increasing the likelihood to reach the critical mass of key decision makers to implement a specific change or reform. For example, by sending a group of MPs from a number of different political parties on the same municipal finance study tour to the United States in 2006, USAID and World Learning along with the Research Triangle Institute, fostered relationships across party lines, allowing for the parliament to subsequently pass amendments to the Constitution which finally enabled municipalities to set their own tax rates.

In 2000, training-related small grants were added to the program to further enhance training impact. World Learning Bulgaria was instrumental in getting this unique program component added to Participant Training Programs for the region. A total of 66 small grants averaging \$5,000 each were made to assist participants with implementation of their action plans upon training completion. For example, after a study tour in Denmark and Poland on municipal council management practices in 2003, the Mayor of Strumyani published brochures informing citizens about available services and established a new Center for Information and Services for Citizens with a small grant under the program. Other examples of small training-related grants include the establishment of computer and information centers in poor Roma neighborhoods, inter-municipal cooperation for developing a regional economic development plan, an anti-drug project, enhancing professionalism and ethnic tolerance through multi-ethnic training of journalists, and a series of seminars to involve citizens in local government.

From early on, the USAID/Bulgaria Mission has ensured that the Participant Training Program was strategically and closely aligned with its technical assistance in the various sector programs. This cross-cutting nature of the training portfolio was unanimously acknowledged as one of the reasons for the programs' effectiveness. Participant satisfaction and career self-reporting – although just one means of measuring effectiveness – reported among the highest for the CEE region satisfaction with the programs attended. One training impact assessment report covering 1997 and first half of 1998<sup>3</sup> found that in Bulgaria, 31% of those interviewed were "very satisfied" and 69% were "satisfied" with the U.S. Training Program after the application of skills learned. Probably more importantly, 27% reported that they had "completely" accomplished their objectives, 55% reported that they "almost completely" accomplished their objectives, 5% reported that they had only "partially" achieved their objectives and 5% reported that they had "not at all" achieved their objectives. On a more personal level, 11 of the 19 people surveyed indicated that following the program, they received increased responsibilities, 5 were promoted, and 1 received a salary increase.

In 2004, USAID/Bulgaria commissioned an assessment to recommend the best approach to sustain training achievements and maintain the network of USAID trainees alive. The evaluators reported very positive results from USAID/Bulgaria's Participant Training Program, stating feedback from former participants, institutions served and USAID TA contractors and grantees, that PTP was successful in most respects. Most importantly, the PTP has had a measurable beneficial impact on Bulgaria's development toward a market-oriented, democratic society as it

---

<sup>3</sup> Aguirre International, "Central and Eastern Europe and New Independent States Training Program Impact: FY 1998," (Washington, D.C.: March 1999)

moved toward membership in the European Union.” Although the assessment recommended the best “legacy” approach would be to “affiliate the training contractor capacity with an indigenous training NGO or university,” neither USAID nor World Learning chose that approach. In January 2006, World Learning’s local staff registered as a local NGO, the Bulgarian Center for Development and Training (BCDT) which provided training related support to USAID partners through the Mission close-out. Unfortunately, the organization decided to close its activities in the middle of 2008.

*East Central European Scholarship Program  
Implementer: Georgetown University*

A Congressionally-mandated regional program, managed and funded by USAID/Washington, the Georgetown East Central European Scholarship Program (ECESP) began including participants from Bulgaria in 1998. The Program trained leaders, experts, administrators and managers in such areas as managing change, strengthening democratic governance, building a vibrant civil society, promoting effective foreign policy, ensuring sustainable private sector growth and a transparent financial sector, and improving health, social and education services. From Bulgaria, 167 people completed long-term (7-12 months) training in the U.S., while another 56 received short-term training in the US again. The unique benefit of the ECESP scholarships is that the candidates who pass the tough selection procedures are offered tailored mix of courses at prime US Universities to best serve their individual career interest and priorities. Eight hundred sixty nine people participated in short courses organized in Bulgaria related to health care, accounting, and labor market policies, and another 29 people were trained on health care financing in Poland. Thus a total of more than 1,100 Bulgarian benefited from the ECESP programs.

*American University of Bulgaria (AUBG)*

AUBG is a four-year, liberal arts undergraduate educational institution located in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. It was founded in 1991 with the technical expertise of the University of Maine, strong financial support by USAID and the Open Society Institute, and the cooperation of the Bulgarian government at the local, regional and national levels. Since its founding, the American University in Bulgaria has benefited from more than \$62 M in USG funds. SEED funding of over \$53 M was used to establish the new entity and build its institutional capacity. The AUBG performance during the first ten years of existence was not stellar. A sinking endowment of approximately \$ 15 million established in 1997 was exhausted by 2001. These were difficult years for the University when its future was at stake. Numerous USAID assessments and independent evaluations of AUBG identified a number of areas that needed improvement in terms of academic and general management. In an effort to assist the University mature and achieve sustainability, in 2002 USAID entered into a ten-year Cooperative Agreement with AUBG (\$21.2 M) to provide additional funding for another endowment. The program was intended to enable the university to achieve financial sustainability independent of USG assistance by 2008. The joint efforts of USAID and AUBG have led to tremendous changes in AUBG since June 2002. The student loan program transitioned from a university-financed

program to a commercial loan program. The accounting system was successfully redesigned to adhere to U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and the University substantially reduced its operating deficit, reporting a surplus in 2007 for the first time in its history. The University has also greatly improved its system of reporting making financial activities more transparent to important stakeholders. In 2007 AUBG also successfully fund raised for over € 1,000,000 in private contributions, and attracted students from more than dozen countries in the world. The endowment agreement signed with the University in 2002 expires in 2012. AUBG entered the post-oversight period of the agreement in the summer of 2007. During the post-oversight, USAID will receive AUBG reports and will retain certain residual refund and termination rights.

ASHA support of over \$9.5 M has made the first stages of AUBG new campus a reality-- residence halls, an academic building, and the library are all in place. A third residence hall and a student center are underway. The FY 2009 ASHA application submitted (and supported by the US Mission in Sofia) earlier this year requested \$1.1M. If approved, the grant will provide funds to support the further development of the campus with attention to playing fields, outdoor recreation space, plantings, walkways, and a bridge to connect the campus and community. Despite being on a trajectory of rising financial sustainability, AUBG will continue to rely on ASHA funds for their ambitious infrastructure projects in the near future.

Throughout the years, AUBG has become a beacon of American ideas and practices in education, and has established itself as the best private liberal arts university in the region. AUBG's mission has been "to educate future leaders committed to serving the needs of the region by promoting the values of an open, democratic society." The curriculum is based on the liberal arts model of the U.S. and is taught in English. The University is seen as a major USG legacy, and USAID committed itself to leaving behind a financially stable and well-regarded institution after its graduation.

AUBG has achieved a great deal in its 17-year history. Today it has a solid record of preparing the next generation of leaders who are committed to democratic principles and processes in a region that is rapidly changing. The University has grown steadily since the opening in 1991 with a first-year class of 208 students mostly from Bulgaria and 16 full-time faculty members. Currently 1,100 students from more than 27 countries are enrolled full-time. A faculty of 77 professors supports the students. The faculty is a diverse group representing four continents and providing students with a broad range of perspectives and ideas. The students study a wide variety of majors including: Business Administration; Computer Science; Economics; European Studies; History; Journalism and Mass Communications; Mathematics; Political Science and International Relations; and Southeast European Studies. As of 2008, 2,185 students from 34 countries have graduated from AUBG. Approximately 35% of the students continue onto their graduate degree study in some of the best American and European Universities – including The London School of Economics, Oxford, Stanford, Duke, Cornell, the University of Chicago, Georgia Tech, Purdue, Tulane, etc. The remaining 65% find meaningful professional positions in their home countries or other countries around the world.

The Executive Masters of Business Administration (EMBA) program is a 16-month weekend study program that offers an adult learning opportunity focused on both theoretical and practical aspects of business management. In just five years the program has graduated 133 students from nine different countries.

*Establish and Ensure Media Freedom and Freedom of Information*  
*Implementer: Broadcast Training Center (BTC)*

The Mission views Bulgarian media as major partners in advocating for reform. The Support to the Broadcast Training Center (BTC), an indigenous successor of IREX/ProMedia, the Washington based implementer of USAID/Bulgaria's earlier media activities, was added to SO 4.2 after the close-out of the former SO 2.1. USAID had directly supported BTC with \$923K during the past four year, September 2004 – June 2008. The program included two closely related components: (1) training the media professionals needed to conduct active advocacy for reforms (the first three years of the program), and (2) involving independent media in advocacy campaigns in favor of reform in key areas (throughout the four-year period).

The training component of the program focused on the qualitative side of the media development process by building high professional standards through training in both technical skills and reform issues. In October 2004 – September 2007 BTC carried out training events for journalists at national, regional and local print and broadcast media outlets covering key areas of reforms: Rule of Law and Fighting Corruption; Local Government, Fiscal Decentralization and Economic Reform; and Reporting on Ethnic and Vulnerable Group Issues. Working closely with the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria, BTC trained reporters to better understand and cover the issues of local government and fiscal decentralization. Through a series of training seminars BTC helped increase the level of professionalism of beat reporters covering Rule of Law topics. The specialized training courses were held by BTC investigative journalism trainers, magistrates and law enforcement experts in cooperation with local courts, prosecutor's offices and police departments. As a result, beat reporters from the key national and local publications have started covering rule of law issues in a more professional manner

The essence of the advocacy component has been the first regular syndicated television anti-corruption investigative program "Na Chisto" (Clean Slate). The program is produced by the Broadcast Training Center ProMedia Foundation and is shown every Sunday on Nova TV, one of the three broadcast Television stations with national coverage in Bulgaria. Over 250 episodes have been produced and aired since the start of the project, investigating corruption and abuse of power at every level of government - national, regional, and local. The audience of the program has grown rapidly. Currently, the show enjoys 22-25% market share of the national Television audience and is watched by over 400,000 viewers on a regular basis. The program focuses on investigation of corruption and abuse of power and thus helps build strong public support for increased transparency and accountability of public institutions. A number of programs have prompted public institutions to take action against corrupt officials. Some of the most prominent "Na Chisto" success stories include: (1) The Director of the Bulgarian Posts was fired after "Na Chisto" exposed his intentional breach of the Public Procurement Act in favoring a private security company; (2) "Na Chisto" was instrumental in preventing the passage of a planned

Amnesty Law, under which pedophiles and pimps would have been released, but small time burglars would have served longer sentences; (3) A human trafficking chain was broken after “Na Chisto” exposed a scheme for illegal sales of Roma babies in Greece; (4) The privatization of Bulgarian State Shipping Company was stopped after the program exposed bias in the process in favoring a private company owned by the former director of the state-owned enterprise. The Ministry of Transportation cancelled the procedure and developed new guidelines for the privatization of the company. In addition to that, several programs have served as the background for parliamentary question time inquiries; cases exposed in the program have been reviewed by the anti-corruption committee of Parliament and by city councils across Bulgaria. During the last year of the project special attention was given to three priority areas: corruption at the highest political level, abuse of EU funds and corruption in political party financing.

The program won a series of awards (including the Supreme Judicial Council Annual Award for contribution to the reform of the judiciary in 2005). Although USAID support has ended, the “Na Chisto” program continues in partnership with Nova TV and some funding from Bulgaria Fund. BTC remains a major USAID legacy in the country and will continue to work towards its policy goals - foster free, independent and professional media in Bulgaria, provide the highest standards in professional media training, serve as the leader in high quality independent Television production, strengthen professional media organizations, identify and train the next generation of media leaders of a new, democratic Bulgaria.

*Improved Access to Clean Water and Sanitation*  
*Implementer: Deltech*

In FY 2003 USAID launched a new initiative to improve the quality of water sector services by introducing training and certifying operators through a two-year program aiming to support the establishment of a sustainable training center for water and wastewater utilities operators. This initiative aimed to improve regulations in the field of water services, and thus attract potential investors in the economy. In addition, it also aimed to improve the quality of services provided by the municipalities for its citizens and industries. While access to water and sewer is widespread in Bulgaria, the absence of both a training regimen and certification requirements for water and sewer operators exposes the general public to health complications caused by poor operational and maintenance standards. With USAID support, four Bulgarian trainers, in cooperation with their U.S. partners, developed a pilot program for training and certification of wastewater operators. Three pilot one-week courses were conducted in May-June 2005 and 90 operators were successfully trained and certified. At completion in October 2005 the project transferred all training materials and project property to the sectoral Bulgarian University of Architecture, Civil Construction and Geodesy, which pledged to further develop the activity.

*Improve Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Biodiversity)*  
*Implementer: Bulgarian National Trust Eco Fund (NTEF)*

In 2004, after more than ten years of actively supporting biodiversity conservation in Bulgaria, USAID closed its programs in the sector and left behind:

- A sound legal framework in place
- The first 10-year management plans for two of the three National Parks in the country - Rila and Central Balkan National Parks - developed and under implementation
- The Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan and management mechanism for its implementation
- The National Eco-Tourism Strategy for Bulgaria and a five-year Ecotourism Action Plan, both of them approved by the GOB in February 2004.

In spite of the many successes, issues primarily related to sustainable mechanisms for financing protected areas activities persisted. After the graduation of its biodiversity program in 2004, USAID continued to provide limited support to the GOB policy for protected areas management through establishing a sustainable mechanism for financing protected areas activities. A Protected Areas Fund (PAF), the first conservation trust fund in Eastern Europe, was established in the framework of the existing National Eco Trust Fund and institutionalized to enable donors to release funds. In June 2005, USAID provided a small grant to the Bulgarian National Trust Eco Fund to manage the newly-established Protected Areas Fund (PAF). Under the grant PAF developed its financial and management systems, internal procedures, and communications and fundraising capacity, thus achieving operational and financial sustainability.

#### *Health finance reform*

##### *Implementer: Bearing Point*

This activity was entirely funded under SO 1.4. However, at the time the close-out report for that SO was prepared, it only covered achievements for the first three years. The paragraph below focuses on the final two years of the program.

The USAID technical assistance program in health finance reform focused mostly on in-patient financing and hospital care restructuring. A new policy for financing hospitals that emphasizes performance and efficiency was adopted by Ministry of Health and the National Health Insurance Fund in FY 2003. In 2004, the Ministry of Health and the Parliamentary Health Commission approved the framework, proposed by USAID, for institutionalization of the National Health Accounts, a standard set of tables in which different aspects of a nation's health expenditures are represented, within the Ministry. Institutionalization of the National Health Accounts creates the process of collecting, analyzing and reporting total health care spending routinely. In 2005 four regional hospital management studies were conducted jointly by USAID and WB experts, which provided a set of recommendations for the GOB to act on. Due to the lack of donor pressure and GOB unwillingness to make the tough reforms decisions, the recommendations failed to be adopted and implemented. Thus, irrespective of the small victories during the life of the Health financing project through 2005, the health care system is still characterized by absence of a relationship between services rendered and funding received, which creates inequities in the hospital system and affects the ability of the State to deliver medical care.

#### *Emergency Humanitarian assistance*

##### *Implementer: Various*

USAID has provided over \$66M in humanitarian and emergency assistance to Bulgaria since 1990. In the early transition years, 1990-1996, USAID provided critical medical supplies and food aid to meet emergency needs. During the rapid reform years, 1997-2001, USAID provided major support for crisis recovery from the financial crisis 1996-1997 and to alleviate the consequences of the Kosovo war, 1999-2000. Some of these activities have already been covered in SO 4.1 close-out report. In more recent years, 2002-2007, USAID has provided the following assistance:

Flood assistance in 2005: From May through September 2005, Bulgaria experienced several waves of torrential rains that caused heavy flooding throughout the country. The damage proved extensive, affecting over 3.2 million people (about 40% of the Bulgarian population). About \$1.45 million in funding provided by the USAID Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), combined with \$250,000 from the State Department, were used to provide equipment for immediate recovery efforts and direct assistance to affected populations. DOD also donated excess property valued at \$130,000 to organizations and municipalities in the affected regions. The American Red Cross received a \$50,000, three-month grant to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the summer 2005 floods. Together with the Bulgarian Red Cross, it delivered 1,350 blankets, 925 mattresses, 1,350 bedding sets, 3,500 food parcels, and 175 hygienic parcels to 90 locations in 7 regions reaching 3,750 beneficiaries.

CARE International-Bulgaria received a total of \$1.65 million for a longer-term effort that included both immediate relief assistance for and recovery from the summer 2005 and spring 2006 floods, as well as equipment for the State Agency for Civil Protection to improve its capacity. In August 2005, with \$399,000 through OFDA, CARE donated motor pumps, inflatable boats and engines, skin diving equipment and protective clothes for rescue workers, chemical toilets, motor saws, food parcels, water, sanitary packages and disinfection chemicals. Under a separate \$1.25 million grant, CARE-Bulgaria delivered 37 pumps for three districts to address the immediate need to pump water out of the affected areas. In addition, 593 households and 9 institutions received heating materials (404 tons of wood and 663 tons of coal); 616 households received 1,913 blankets and 1,785 bed sets (distributed through the Agency for Social Assistance); and 1,561 households received 744 cooking stoves, 622 washing machines and 537 refrigerators. During the spring 2006 floods, CARE-Bulgaria delivered mineral water and food supplies to Vidin, Lom and Nikopol as well as the village of Dolni Tsibar. Also purchased under the project, to boost the capacity of the State Agency for Civil Protection, were steam jet cleaners, life saving jackets, static rescue ropes, flat discharge hoses for pumps, flat discharge hoses, suction hoses and fittings, and three rescue vehicles.

Avian Influenza: In 2006, USAID provided more than \$900,000 through four organizations to improve Bulgaria's preparedness for dealing with Avian Influenza (AI). Due to its proximity to Turkey and Romania, Bulgaria is at risk for the highly pathogenic strain of Avian Influenza, and has already experienced some limited outbreaks. USAID granted the World Health Organization (WHO) \$250,000 for technical assistance and training for Ministry of Health personnel. CARE International-Bulgaria received a \$400,000 cooperative agreement to purchase laboratory equipment and computers to improve surveillance, prevention and control. In addition, through its Washington office, USAID donated personal protective equipment. USAID contracted with a

local NGO, Foundation for Community Development (FORA), to implement a \$50,000 public education campaign. Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) trained more than 430 veterinarians under a \$200,000 USAID contract. USDA complemented the USAID program by covering some of the training costs. As a result of this USG assistance, measures are now in place to address a potential outbreak of Avian Influenza in Bulgaria.

Wildfire Assistance in the summer of 2007: The fires affected approximately 230 000 decares and damaged woodlands, natural parks, and farmlands and emergency situation was declared in four regions and 11 municipalities. The U. S. Ambassador to Bulgaria requested USD 50,000 for immediate disaster relief from USAID/OFDA. USG disaster relief resources were used by USAID through ECIP foundation (indigenous organization) for the immediate local purchase of emergency communication equipment on behalf of the GOB agency for civil protection and direct procurement of fire fighting equipment

USAID humanitarian assistance efforts in Bulgaria over the years have proven to be a real asset. USAID ability to deliver quickly in times of crisis has not only helped save lives and reduce human suffering, but also can engender positive public opinion of Americans. While technical assistance and training programs are important to long-term development, sometimes they are not visible to the general population, and even when they are, understanding how they benefit the common man or woman is sometimes difficult. However, humanitarian relief efforts are highly visible, do not necessarily cost a lot of money, and are usually easier for people to understand. For example, the \$400,000 OFDA grant for flood assistance generated 40 news reports in the local media in August, 2005 alone. By comparison, the rest of the USAID ongoing development program only resulted in 25 news reports for the same month.

### *Bulgaria Fund*

*Implementer: The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)*

The Bulgaria Fund is a three-year, \$3 million grant making initiative to support three key areas of reform and development in Bulgaria: good governance, support to vulnerable groups, and competitiveness. The Fund is modeled after and is managed by the German Marshall Fund Balkan Trust for Democracy, a successful partnership between USAID, GMF and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation established in 2003. The Fund was officially launched in November 2007. Indigenous and Bulgaria-based international organizations are eligible for funding. The Bulgaria Fund also supports programs that have a regional or international focus, creating linkages between Bulgarian government, business, NGOs and their counterparts in other countries in order to learn best practices, expand local economic opportunities, and develop sustainable partnerships for future coordination. In less than a year, the Fund has disbursed over \$1.2 million to 30 indigenous organizations for projects focusing on rule of law, transparency, good governance, and minority issues. Another \$500K will be disbursed by the end of October. The Bulgaria Fund is a timely initiative allowing for USAID legacy organizations and other smaller NGOs to continue to work on priority reforms in the country, thus filling in a major gap for the sector.

The program is still active and is managed out of Budapest. There is a liaison at the U.S. Embassy to provide feedback and maintain the contact on the ground.

### *Program Development and Support Activities*

The Program Development and Support (PDS) activities were instrumental in facilitating progress across all strategic objectives by ensuring the necessary analytical data information flow necessary for tracking progress. In the early years, the majority of PDS funds covered FSN and U.S. program-funded personnel contracts including salary, benefits, travel and training costs, and related administrative expenditures. After 1999 the Mission used PDS resources for program-related evaluations and assessments. With the maturity of the Mission's portfolio and in approaching the close-out, the PDS fund became even more valuable and was used for a big variety of program support activities from short-term crosscutting activities, to workshops and consultancies, impact evaluations and sectoral studies, publications and public outreach events. In 2001- 2003, PDS funds were instrumental in supporting the development of USAID/Bulgaria graduation strategy. In FY 2007 – 2008, PDS funds were utilized to conduct a full-blown public outreach campaign to publicize USAID achievements in Bulgaria at the close-out stage. The availability of this pot of money managed by the Program Office has been a valuable tool providing the necessary flexibility to the Mission in support of its strategic priorities.

### **Key Lessons Learned**

The availability of a crosscutting SO although not mandatory, turned out to be a useful management tool for the Mission. Keeping the training programs outside the specific technical areas allowed for a more strategic approach in allocating the scarce resources and their efficient use. Rather than giving training budget to each strategic objective, the Mission established a training committee to decide on training priorities annually. The committee, chaired by the Mission Director, applied an unbiased strategic approach while considering the different training proposals. Thus, training programs always addressed the needs of the areas with the highest importance for the reforms in the country.

### **USAID Reports and Assessments**

1990 Bulgarian Elections: A Pre-Election Assessment, the International Foundation for Elections Systems, May 1990

American University in Bulgaria: 15 Years of Opportunity

USAID/Bulgaria Country Strategy 1993

USAID/Bulgaria Country Strategy 1994-1996

USAID/Bulgaria Graduation Strategy 2003-2007, June 2003

American University in Bulgaria: Financial Assessment, August 2006

Baser, Fred R; Holmes, Paul M. “World Environmental Center: Central and Eastern Europe Program – an evaluation of cooperative agreement no. ANE-0004-A-00-0045-00; November, 1992.

Biddle, C. Stark, Hopkins, Mark and Harencar, Oleg. “Evaluation of the USAID Professional Media Program in Central and Eastern Europe,” Development Associates, October 1998.

Evaluating the first eight years: 1988-1996 -- biodiversity support program [BSP]. World Wildlife Fund-U.S. (WWF) | The Nature Conservancy (TNC) | World Resources Institute (WRI) | USAID. Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research. Center for Environment. Office of Environment and Natural Resources. March, 1997

Dimitrina Boteva (Biodiversity Specialist, BCEG). “Development and Implementation of an Ecological Monitoring System for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks – Report.” Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth (BCEG) Project. Associates in Rural Development, Inc. 2003

Grimes, Alicia (EE/EEST/ENR); Myers, Gregory (EE/EEST/ENR), and Ploetz, Jeff (EISN Project, DevTech Systems, Inc.). “Assessment of Natural Resources and the Environment: Issues and Opportunities for USAID/Sofia – Final Report.” USAID/Washington; February 2002.

Hopkins, Mark, Birch, Sarah and Mason, John. “Bulgaria Political Party Development Assistance Assessment and Program Design,” Development Associates, April 2002.

Media Sustainability Index 2005, IREX with USAID funding

Report of the ALO team to USAID on USAID funding to AUBG, 2001

SEED Act Implementation Report, Support for East European Democracy, FY 1998 – FY 2004 Annual Reports, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia

US Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with Central and Eastern Europe, FY 2005 - FY 2007 Annual Reports, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia

USAID/Bulgaria Annual Reports 1998 - 2006

USAID in Bulgaria: 1990-2007, A Story of Partnership and Progress, July 2007

USAID/EGAT. “Bulgarian Participant Training Program Legacy Assessment.” Washington, D.C.: 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2004

### **Key contacts**

USAID/Bulgaria

Ivanka Tzankova, Program Officer,  
TzankovaIN@state.gov