

World Bank - Grant Reporting and Monitoring (GRM) Report

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Ref. TF054774
Printed On: 08/24/2010

Reporting Period: 03/08/2005 to 06/30/2010
Report Type: Completion
Report Status: Approved

Assignment: TF054774

GEF MSP-BULGARIA: LAKE POMORIE CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

GEFIA - GEF-IBRD AS IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

Task Team Leader: 00000213536 - Anna Georgieva
Approving Manager: 00000083337 - John V. Kellenberg

Summary Information	
TF Status	LCLS
Recipient Country	Bulgaria
Executed By	Recipient
Managing Unit	1885 - ECSSD
Grant Start Date / Closing Date	03/08/2005 to 02/01/2010
Program Manager	
Orig. Grant Amount	863,100.00
Grant Amount	861,170.00
Outstanding Commitments	0.00
Cumulative Disbursements	861,170.00 as of 06/30/2010
Disbursed 03/08/2005 to 06/30/2010	861,170.00
Donor	TF602001 - MULTIPLE DONORS

This GRM report includes the following sections: Overview, Outcome, Components/Outputs, Execution, Program(GEFIA), Completion, Processing, Attached Documents, Disbursements, Internal Comments.

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OVERVIEW

Overall Assessments and Ratings

Grant Objectives:

This Project aims to promote the sustainable management of the Lake Pomorie and wetland ecosystem by fostering a combination of restoration, conservation and sustainable production activities. Through a partnership comprised of an NGO, the local municipality and the private sector, the Project will integrate the conservation of globally important bird habitat and unique hyper-saline plant and animal communities with the sustainable management of tourism and the area's natural resources. To achieve this, the project will: (i) support the development and implementation of long-term protected area management plans which emphasize natural resource conservation, restoration, and management, (ii) restore the ecosystem's natural resources base and hydrological balance; (iii) promote the sustainable management of the lake's natural resources through an innovative multi-stakeholder partnership; (iv) build awareness among local communities and the tourism sector about the benefits of eco-tourism; and (v) improve collaboration with other wetland restoration sites in Bulgaria.

Overall progress from 03/08/2005 to 06/30/2010 with regard to Achieving Grant Objectives:

Rating: Satisfactory(Previously Rated Satisfactory on)

Comment:

The project was successfully completed achieving the grant objective: contributing to long-term conservation of Lake Pomorie ecosystems, and reaching target values regarding threatened and rare bird species, and the development of the management plan. The management plan has been approved by Green Balkans and MoEW. The channel linking the lake to the sea was restored. This saved the lake by restoring the salinity of the water. As a result, fish and birds returned to the lake. Bird colonies are stable and increasing. The visitors' center was constructed. Green Balkans succeeded in securing additional funding with EU funds.

Overall progress from 03/08/2005 to 06/30/2010 with regard to Implementation of Grant Financed Activities:

Rating: Satisfactory(Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on)

Comment:

Cooperation between Green Balkans and the municipality was initially difficult which led to delays in the first year of the project. Following intermediation by the Bank team, this cooperation improved and all activities were successfully concluded. The visitors' center was inaugurated together by the town mayor and Green Balkans.

Grant follow-up and structure

Description and context of Grant:

Project components:

Description and context of Grant:

Project components:

1. Development of management framework (estimated GEF US\$8,090, total US \$18,890): The Project will start by securing the multi-stakeholder management framework for Project implementation. A Memorandum of Understanding between Green Balkans (Project proposer) and the Pomorie municipality has already been agreed upon during project preparation, and it will be revised as appropriate during project implementation. During the management planning process, various options for formal management designation will be analyzed and subject to review by the local Consultative Group.

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2. Development of Lake Pomorie Management Plan (estimated GEF US \$131,250, total US\$162,750): The Project will finance the development of long-term plans for the conservation, management and restoration of the Lake's natural resources. Program itineraries developed to achieve these goals will include water management, management of ecosystem resources (including in-depth baseline studies on status and threats), environmental monitoring, public awareness, training needs assessments, socio-economic surveys, and financial sustainability. Necessary steps during this design stage will include technical studies for the critical assessment of these programs, expert review of the programs as they develop, local consultative processes to review the programs and proposed zoning.

3. Implementation of Management Plan (estimated US\$561,760 GEF, total cost US\$1,510,350) This component will consist of four major subcomponents:

(i) Institutional Strengthening which includes the establishment of administration and tourism infrastructure with associated equipment, training for local stakeholders as well as stakeholder exchange programs; (ii) Public Awareness and Environmental Education Programs which will raise the awareness and involvement of local communities in the management of the lake's resources; (iii) Natural Resources Management and Restoration, including restoration of existing civil works which maintain the lake's hydrological balance, the restoration of critical habitat and the development and implementation of a long-term natural resources management program which is to be jointly implemented by the administration and local stakeholders; (iv) a monitoring program which will provide continual updates on the status of not only the lake's biodiversity, but also other critical natural resources and social indicators related to the lake's management; and parallel financing from the Municipality through an EU Phare proposal on the Development of Pomorie Ecotourism which will focus on the development of diversification of the ecotourism sector by focusing on attractions related to the regulation of the curative mud sector as well as the development of salt baths (located near the proposed administrative center).

4. Project Management and National Collaboration (estimated US\$162,000 GEF, total cost US\$243,200). Green Balkans and the Pomorie municipality will install a small Project Management Unit at the Project Site. Green Balkans will be the legal grantee, and therefore responsible for all procedures related to procurement, financial management and project monitoring & evaluation functions. Actions and major decision-making regarding project implementation will be done collaboratively between Green Balkans and Pomorie representatives, who will together establish a joint PMU, which may be formally designated as Protected Site Administration by the MoEW if deemed appropriate after significant analysis and review have been done during the management planning process. This component will cover minor operational costs and workshops necessary for stakeholder consultations and joint training programs with stakeholders from other wetland ecosystems in Bulgaria and the region,

Expected follow up (if any): Follow up project or grant (non-Bank funded)

Comment on follow up:

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Green Balkans has applied successfully for two EU-funded projects to ensure sustainability of the Pomorie lake project, and to provide for the infrastructure of the protected area and needed equipment and furniture for the visitors' centre.

End Date of Last Site Visit:

Restructuring of Grant:

Activity Risk

Rating: Negligible or Low Risk

Comment:

There is no risk for the Bank. The project is successfully completed.

Critical Issues and Pending Actions for Management Attention

There are currently no issues and actions for Management attention.

OUTCOME

Comments on outcome achieved from 03/08/2005 to 06/30/2010

Grant Outcome Indicators

Grant outcome indicators are listed below.

Management plan of Pomorie Lake adopted by all stakeholders and implemented according to the BG Protected Areas Law.

Baseline No Management plan of Pomorie Lake, only Order for declaration of Protected site.

Value:

Date: 05/01/2005

Progress to Developed Management Plan approved by all stakeholders and Ministry of Environment and Waters.

Date:

Date: 02/02/2010

Target Value: Developed Management Plan approved by all stakeholders and Ministry of Environment and Waters.

Date: 02/01/2010

Restoration of the hydro-biological and hydrological status and the salinity of the lagoon; restoration of breeding habitats.

Baseline Uncontrolled hydrological balance, non-working connection canal between Black sea and Pomorie Lake, not sufficient nesting habitat for water birds

Value:

Date: 05/01/2005

Progress to Working canal and stable hydrological balance. Created new habitat /island/ for threatened water birds.

Date:

Date: 02/02/2010

Target Value: Working canal and stable hydrological balance. Created new habitat /island/ for threatened water birds.

Date: 02/01/2010

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200 % increase number of breeding pairs of 6 rare bird species identified during Ramsar designation process

Baseline Value: 300 pairs of Sandwich terns, 5 pairs of Avocet and 10 pairs of Common terns used to nest at the site of the colony in 2005.
Date: 05/01/2005

Progress to Date: Stable population of nesting threatened bird colonies (Sandwich, Little, Common terns), Avocets, Black-winged stilts, Kentish plovers. 1500 nesting pairs of Sandwich terns, 154 pairs of Avocets.
Date: 02/02/2010

Target Value: Keeping this number stable and increasing it with construction of the new nesting habitat /island/.
Date: 02/01/2010

Local communities possess good understanding of the project, support its objectives and are updated on its results

Baseline Value: In 2005 the total area of Pomorie Lake protected site was 760 ha and the Ramsar site was 814 ha.
Date: 05/01/2005

Progress to Date: Additional 1300 ha of land and sea territory with protection regime added through adoption of EU Natura 2000 protected sites. Designation order for SPA (Natura 2000) by Minister of MOEW.
Date: 02/02/2010

Target Value: Assurance of effective long-term protection for the existing and new added protected areas through adoption of the management plan.
Date: 02/01/2010

Local communities possess good understanding of the project, support its objectives and are updated on its results

Baseline Value: Insufficient knowledge about the lake, its problems, the project and its activities.
Date: 05/01/2005

Progress to Date: Established local consultative group of interested parties. Environmental education program at Pomorie schools. First Eco festival Pomorie Lake held annually & visitors centre built.
Date: 02/02/2010

Target Value: Promotion of Pomorie Lake and its unique features among local stakeholders with the aim of its long-term conservation. The eco festival becomes a traditional event at Pomorie.
Date: 02/01/2010

COMPONENTS/OUTPUTS

Output and Implementation by Component

Development of management framework

Implementation Rating: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)

Status: Completed

Planned Output: An agreement for cooperation between Green Balkans and Pomorie municipality is prepared and approved by the municipal council.

Actual Output: An agreement for cooperation between Green Balkans and Pomorie municipality is prepared. and

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approved by the municipal council.

Development of lake Pomorie management plan

Implementation Rating: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)
Status: Completed
Planned Output: The Management plan is ready and approved by Green Balkans and MOEW
Actual Output: The Management plan is ready and approved by Green Balkans and MOEW.

Implementation of management plan

Implementation Rating: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)
Status: Completed
Planned Output: Maintain the lake's hydrological balance and critical habitats
Actual Output: The canal connecting the lake to the sea has been restored. Biodiversity and hydrological indicators are monitored twice a month. Nesting habitats are maintained.

Project management and national collaboration

Implementation Rating: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)
Status: Completed
Planned Output: Functioning project management unit and collaboration between stakeholders
Actual Output: The PMU continues to function and cooperates well with MOEW, private salt producers, and the municipal council.

Comment on planned and actual Output

Comment on component implementation progress

The channel connecting the lake to the sea is restored thereby saving the lake, its unique flora and fauna. The management plan is prepared and approved by MOEW. Green Balkans has secured EU funding to finance the protected area infrastructure and equipment for the visitors' centre. Rare bird species numbers have increased. The visitors' centre has been constructed and was inaugurated at an official ceremony on June 10, 2010.

EXECUTION

Bank project related to the grant

Project ID / Name: P077800 - LAKE POMORIE CONSV (GEF MSP)
Project Status: Lending
Global Focal Area: Biodiversity
Product Line: GM - GEF Medium Sized Program

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Implementing agency and contact details

Agency: GREEN BALKANS CONSERVATION NGO
Contact: MR. TOMA BELEV, CHAIRMAN OF THE MANAGING BOARD
Address: PLOVDIV, BULGARIA
Phone: 359 32 626 977 **Email:** OFFICE@GREENBALKANS.ORG
Website:

Implementation performance ratings from 03/08/2005 to 06/30/2010 with regard to:

Project Management: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)

Brief Comment:

The project management is good. The team is pro-active in developing international cooperation.

Financial Management: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)

Brief Comment:

Financial management is satisfactory. Audits establish satisfactory accounting.

Counterpart Funding: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)

Brief Comment:

The municipality has allocated a land plot and financed the design of the visitors' center against an original commitment of US\$846,605. Green Balkans has provided co-financing of US\$634,611.

Procurement: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)

Brief Comment:

Procurement is satisfactory.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Satisfactory (Previously Rated Satisfactory on)

Brief Comment:

The PMU has provided good reports on the status of the monitoring indicators, as well as project brochures, films and feature stories.

Additional Comments on Implementation Performance:

The project was successfully completed.

PROGRAM

Program Specific Ratings

1. Please rate public involvement - Satisfactory
2. Please rate government commitment - Satisfactory
3. Please rate safeguard performance - Satisfactory
4. Please rate arrangements for sustainability - Satisfactory

Program Specific Questions

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1. Please comment on additional resources leveraged

The NGO managed to leverage additional resources to be used for the infrastructure of the protected area and visitors' centre equipment from EU structural funds.

COMPLETION

Overall Assessments and Lessons Learned

Main lessons learned:

The project is a good example of how top-bottom approaches can complement top-down (national and European) efforts such as establishing the EU Natura 2000 network of protected areas and wetlands according to the RAMSAR Convention. Despite the small size of the project, it is important as a pilot and replication model introducing new ideas for sustainable management of protected areas and showing how natural wetlands can be used to create unique tourism products and stimulate economic development. The project introduced a new model of cooperation between the local government, NGOs and the private sector and showed how even considerable implementation difficulties can be overcome with good cooperation and with strong support from the Bank team working closely with all stakeholders. The project managed to mobilize additional resources and support from state authorities, local businesses, municipal councilors, citizens and donors. The project team successfully established international contacts and secured further funding for the task and the project area increasing its profile.

Overall outcome (and its Sustainability): Rated Likely

Comment:

Although the project is small, the benefits from it are significant and impacts far exceed the local level as the project contributed to protection of key wetlands along the second biggest migratory route Via Pontica, recognized by the Ramsar Convention and Natura 2000. Despite initial difficulties, the project achieved the following outcomes:

- A) The project helped save and restore bird habitats of global significance. The restored sea-lake canal saved the lake where the hydrological conditions were rapidly deteriorating. The restored natural conditions ensured return of fish and bird species, continuing traditional salt production and curative mud extraction which is the basis for the local spa tourism.
- B) The town of Pomorie acquired two new products: a Visitors Centre and Eco-festival (The Magic of the Pomorie Lake) that provide opportunities for development of environmentally friendly tourism.
- C) The project helped introduce the idea of sustainable tourism for the region providing a replication example, raising biodiversity awareness thanks to the new form of cooperation between the local authorities, the private sector and NGOs.

Thanks to the partnership established between the NGO, municipality and private sector who worked for the same aim, project sustainability is ensured.

Bank Performance: Rated Satisfactory

Comment:

The Bank team worked diligently to prevent the project from being cancelled, after the first year of implementation, and supported the stakeholders in achieving project outcomes and resolving difficulties in communication between the project partners.

Additional Assessment

Development / strengthening of institutions: Rated Substantial

Comment:

The implementing agency, NGO Green Balkans, gained substantial experience from project implementation. The municipality also benefitted from exposure to working with international institutions and to new ideas for sustainable development. This partnership, involving also the salt producers and spa centers, is innovative for Bulgaria.

Mobilization of other resources: Rated Substantial

Comment:

Additional resources were mobilized from EU structural funds by the NGO.

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Knowledge exchange : Rated Substantial

Comment:

With support from the task team, a partnership was established between the NGO and the Po River Park management in Italy. This led to an EU-funded project for knowledge exchange.

Client's policy / program implementation : Rated Modest

Comment:

The project supported Bulgaria in fulfilling both its international obligations and national strategies with respect to biodiversity conservation.

Efficiency : Rated Satisfactory

Comment:

The project was highly cost-effective; significant environmental achievements were attained at a low cost and in a relatively short timeframe.

Replicability: Rated Likely

Comment:

The project establishes a good model for cooperation between an NGO, the municipality and the private sector.

Main recommendations to stakeholders:

The main recommendation to stakeholders is that they should continue the good work and cooperation helping preserve and protect the unique natural riches of the area - the hyper-saline lake with its over 200 rare bird species, and rare plants, the traditional salt production and salt museum, the curative mud extracted from the lake. By using these resources wisely, the area can develop a unique tourist product that will help the economic development of the area and raise living standards while preserving nature for the coming generations. This effect cannot be achieved by destroying nature and over-construction.

Main recommendations to Bank Management:

Thanks to the country manager for his support in project implementation.

PROCESSING

Manager's comments on this GRM report:

None

GRM report history - Requested on 06/10/2010, due on 07/31/2010

Action	Name	Status	Date
Created	Anna Georgieva	Draft	06/14/2010
Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	06/14/2010
Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	06/14/2010
Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	06/14/2010
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Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	06/14/2010
Changed	Angela G. Armstrong	Draft	06/30/2010
Changed	Angela G. Armstrong	Draft	06/30/2010
Changed	Angela G. Armstrong	Draft	06/30/2010
Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	07/04/2010
Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	07/04/2010
Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	07/04/2010
Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	07/19/2010
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Changed	Anna Georgieva	Draft	07/19/2010
Mail sent to Reviewer	Anna Georgieva	Draft	07/19/2010
Email Request has been sent	John V. Kellenberg	Draft	07/19/2010
Changed	Angela G. Armstrong	Draft	07/20/2010
Submitted to TTL	Angela G. Armstrong	Draft	07/20/2010
Email Request has been sent	John V. Kellenberg	Draft	07/20/2010
Submitted for Approval	Anna Georgieva	Submitted	07/21/2010
Email Request has been sent	John V. Kellenberg	Draft	07/21/2010
Approved by Manager	John V. Kellenberg	Approved	07/23/2010
Email Request has been sent	John V. Kellenberg	Submitted	07/23/2010

DOCUMENTS

List of documents attached to this GRM

1) July 18 ICM

DISBURSEMENTS

Disbursements Summary in USD

Date From	Date To	Planned Cumulative	Planned Period	Actual Cumulative	Actual Period
01/01/2005	06/30/2005	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
07/01/2005	12/31/2005	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01/01/2006	06/30/2006	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
07/01/2006	12/31/2006	0.00	0.00	28,400.00	28,400.00
01/01/2007	06/30/2007	0.00	0.00	88,400.00	60,000.00
07/01/2007	12/31/2007	0.00	0.00	128,400.00	40,000.00
01/01/2008	06/30/2008	0.00	0.00	240,400.00	112,000.00
07/01/2008	12/31/2008	0.00	0.00	340,400.00	100,000.00
01/01/2009	06/30/2009	0.00	0.00	340,400.00	0.00

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07/01/2009	12/31/2009	0.00	0.00	640,400.00	300,000.00
01/01/2010	06/30/2010	0.00	0.00	821,170.00	180,770.00

INTERNAL COMMENTS

Date:07/20/2010 User ID:WB98693 Name:Ms Angela G. Armstrong Operation performed:Submitted to TTL

Anna, I made just a few more edits (to note in the overview section that there are no issues for Bank management and in the completion section on efficiency).

Best regards, Angela