

**Project “Integrating Global Environmental Issues into Bulgaria’s
Regional Development Process”**

Exit Strategy

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Background

The GEF-funded Rio Conventions Project (RCP) (full title: *Integrating Global Environmental Issues into Bulgaria's Regional Development Process*) aims at promoting a proactive integration of global environmental issues into the very process of regional and local development, as well as spatial planning, both of which are managed by Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW). This would be achieved by developing the capacity of the MRDPW and the Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW) to integrate global environmental objectives into regional and local development policies and practices, as well as into spatial planning documents.

Based on the findings of the National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) and subsequent discussions with key stakeholders during the PDF-A, the project strategy is to promote a proactive integration of global environmental issues into the very process of regional and local development, as well as spatial planning, both of which are managed by MRDPW. This would be achieved by developing the capacity of MRDPW to integrate global environmental objectives into the regional and local development policies and practices, as well as into spatial planning documents.

At the end of 2008 the project underwent an independent Mid-term Evaluation (MTE). The overall evaluation of the project was “*Satisfactory*”. Along with this, the implementation approach and effectiveness of the project were evaluated as *Satisfactory*, as was the outlook for the sustainability of the project. This Exit Strategy is developed in compliance with the recommendations from the project MTE report. More specifically, Recommendation #7 reads: “It is recommended to prepare an exit plan for the end of the project, which will necessitate a review of the remaining budget and the financial needs to complete the project and a review of the timing of all remaining activities.”

While the original planned closing date for the project was set to 27 June 2010, on a Project Steering Committee meeting on 3 November, 2009 a decision was taken to request a three-month, no-cost extension until 27 September, 2010, which was also agreed by RTA at GEF/UNDP office in Bratislava. The requested no-cost extension was considered important for securing a time “reserve” for the successful completion of the project’s pilot component and was completely in line with Recommendation #7 from the MTE final report.

I. Institutional sustainability

Activities to be taken over by project partners:

Most of the project activities will be taken over or have already entered into the respective programmes and initiatives of the key project partners: the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Ministry of Environment and Waters, Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski* and the NGO Bulgarian Climate Coalition¹. So these institutions and organizations will provide the project with the necessary guarantees for continuation of key (project initiated) activities, given also the fact that funding might be available to sustain some of those activities through the different national, bilateral and international sources: e.g. Operational Programmes, National Fund for Scientific Research, EU programmes for territorial and interregional cooperation (e.g.

¹ www.climatebg.org

INTERREG IVC, Urban Act, etc.), 7th Framework Program on Scientific Research, etc. The different funding programs mentioned above have different beneficiaries – i.e. some funding is specifically targeted at NGOs or academic organizations, whereas other is strictly targeted at national and local authorities and governmental agencies - therefore, it is essential to involve a broad circle of partners in drafting a sustainable and viable project exit strategy.

The overall positive outlook for ensuring beyond-the-project-end sustainability is, to a large extent, also based upon the prospects for a solid institutional foundation, with a number of stakeholders and new organizations which shall continue their activities in the three major areas relevant to the Rio conventions over the coming years: i.e. combating climate change, biodiversity loss and soil degradation. More information on this follows in section II below.

II. Sustainability of specific project outputs and activities

1. Training Program

a) Basic facts

The training program consists of a set of three courses – Introductory course (one-day), Core course (ten-day) and a Master program (three-semester) – on the topic of *Integrating Global Environmental Issues into Regional Development and Spatial Planning in Bulgaria*. The training program was jointly developed (in English language) and tested in the first half of 2008 by Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski* (SU) and the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. The team of two universities also produced the necessary training manuals and background materials (handbooks, handouts and PPTs) (in English language). Subsequently the set of training manuals and materials was translated in Bulgarian and fine-tuned (after the pilot testing) by the Sofia University.

In order to agree on the specific roles and responsibilities regarding the training program delivery, nomination of trainees and covering the expenses of participants a MoU was signed in August 2008 between UNDP, MRDPW and MoEW, which clarified all of the above mentioned issues.

The official delivery of the core training course started on 18 September, 2008 and ended on 26 March, 2010. Eight training sessions were conducted at Sofia University during that period and a total of 140 public employees from MRDPW, MoEW (and their regional units), district administrations and municipalities attended the course. The Introductory training course was delivered by a team of two professors from Sofia University (SU), on the site, between 1 January and 30 June, 2009 in 27 district administrations in Bulgaria (out of 28) and more than 200 employees from DAs and municipalities attended it. The Master course was officially introduced in Sofia University's academic program in October, 2010 and the first cohort of 15 Master students started their training on 2 Nov, 2010. A special brochure in Bulgarian language was also developed in November, 2009 to support SU in advertising activities regarding the new Master course.

b) Initiatives towards ensuring the sustainability

The training program (Introductory, Core and Master course) is already fully institutionalized within the Faculty of Geology and Geography (FGG) at Sofia University. Concrete actions to be undertaken till the project end:

- promote the training courses and distribute the Master course brochure during the project related presentations and events;
- send a letter to the Institute of Public Administration (IPA)² with a proposal to include the Introductory and Core training course in Institute's 2011 Catalogue with professional development courses targeted at public employees.

2. GIS prototype

a) Basic facts

The development of the GIS prototype (pilot) started in February 2009 and was preceded by a number of background assignments, which involved the development of technical and GIS "passports" of the 7 indicators. The prototype shall assist Directorate General "Strategic Regional Development Planning and Administrative-Territorial Organization" (DG SRDPATO) at MRDPW in the monitoring and evaluation of global environmental issues integration in strategic planning documents of the ministry with the support of 5 out of 7 project-developed indicators. The actual work on the pilot GIS started in February 2010.

b) Initiatives towards ensuring the sustainability

Concrete actions to be undertaken till the project end:

- purchase the necessary GIS licenses to ensure the proper testing and installation of the developed prototype;
- complete the development and testing of the prototype;
- develop a training manual and hold one-day training for designated MRDPW employees from DG SRDPATO, DG Regional Development and Directorate Information Systems and Security;
- produce recommendations as to how the prototype GIS could be integrated in other available GIS at the ministry and how it could be extended and used by employees of DG SRDPATO in its territorial units and other directorates at the ministry.

3. Web site(s)

a) Basic facts

The project web (www.rioconventions.org) site was officially launched in June 2007. It contains basic data regarding the process of development, ratification and implementation of the three Rio

² With a decision of the Council of Ministers IPA (<http://www.ipa.government.bg>) is the designated institution that officially coordinates and organizes trainings for the Bulgarian state administration. It publishes an annual catalogue of available courses which is sent to all national, regional and local authorities and agencies, which are part of the state administration and which dispose with a training budget for their employees, funded by the state budget.

Conventions in Bulgaria and worldwide both in English and Bulgarian. In addition, it gives detailed information regarding on-going and completed project activities and tenders and provides an easy access to key publications, deliverables from project assignments and operational project reports and documents. Since September 2008, PMU also benefits from the services of a consultant who supports the project team in the identification, translation and upload of Rio Conventions related news on the project web site. A direct link to the project web site has been added to the web sites of UNDP, MRDPW and MoEW³.

In accordance with the recommendations made during the project Midterm evaluation to improve the “marketing” of the developed courses and increase the demand, a targeted web site⁴ was developed in March 2009 in order to enhance the quality and visibility of information regarding the developed training courses web site. The web site contains brief information regarding each of the 3 types of training courses developed under the project, the available training manuals and course outlines, a picture gallery with selected moments from the trainings that were already implemented. The web site was initially maintained by a consultant hired by RCP, however, since the beginning of 2010 it is fully integrated within the web site of FGG at SU and is maintained by the Faculty’s web administrator.

b) Initiatives towards ensuring the sustainability

Concrete actions to be undertaken till the project end:

- Hold meetings with representatives from the Bulgarian NGO Climate Coalition⁵, which includes organizations like WWF Bulgaria, BlueLink, University Ecological Club UNECO at Sofia University, Gorichka.bg, etc. in order to discuss opportunities to integrate the project web site within the climate change portal maintained by the coalition;
- Organize training for designated representatives from the Climate Coalition regarding basic skills for maintaining the project web site: upload of news, links, banners, etc.

4. Electronic Newsletter and Database

a) Basic facts

The project Electronic Newsletter (in Bulgarian language) was launched in July, 2008. Eight quarterly issues were produced by PMU and sent to a database of more than 850 recipients till 31 March 2010. The electronic database of recipients itself was produced as a result of project assignment in the spring of 2008. Initially it contained nearly 600 electronic addresses of project relevant stakeholders: state, regional and local public institutions and authorities; academic organizations, municipal and business associations, NGOs and media. Over the course of the project implementation the database was continuously enriched with new contacts.

With the launch of the INTERREG IVC funded *Regions for Sustainable Change* (RSC) project (a brief description attached in **Annex 2**) and its newsletter at the beginning of 2009 (RSC project is coordinated by DG SRDPATO at MRDPW) the RCP electronic database was transferred to the

³ <http://www.undp.bg/projects.php?id=1001>, www.mrrb.government.bg, www.moew.government.bg/

⁴ <http://gis.gea.uni-sofia.bg/mmgis/rioconventions>

⁵ www.climatebg.org

designated PM within MRDPW. Since then the two projects continuously exchange contacts of newly identified stakeholders through the different trainings and public events organized under the two projects. Furthermore, due to the fact that the major focus of the RSC project is building climate-resilient EU regions it has been viewed by PMU as a natural “successor” of the activities in the climate change area of the Rio Conventions Project.

b) Initiatives towards ensuring the sustainability

Concrete actions to be undertaken till the project end:

- Produce and send two more issues of RCP electronic newsletter to targeted project stakeholders as the last issue of the newsletter should contain a thank you note to all contributors to the project during the 4 years of its implementation and a brief presentation of the RSC project.

5. Publications distribution

a) Basic facts

Since the project start, the PMU produced a number of reports and 5 printed publications in total (brochures, flyers, CDs and case-studies). All major reports and all five publications are accessible from the *Publications* subsection on project web site⁶. In addition, after the end of the other two UNDP projects focusing on the implementation of the Rio Conventions in Bulgaria – the *Sustainable Land Management Project* and *Rhodope Project* – RCP PMU serves as a natural depository of remaining hard copies of publications from the two projects. Publications from all three projects are distributed at relevant trainings and events by RCP staff and also by Sofia University teaching staff (during the core training course delivery).

b) Initiatives towards ensuring the sustainability

Concrete actions to be undertaken till the project end:

- All remaining hard copy publications after the project end in Sept 2010 shall be transferred to DG SRDPATO at MRDPW and the Information Center of MoEW, including the final project “lessons learnt” publication, in order to continue their distribution at relevant events organized and/or attended by experts from the two ministries. In addition, the project remaining publications shall be directly distributed to interested NGOs, students and citizens using the library and materials at the Information Center of MoEW. Of course, all RCP produced publications shall continue to be available for free download from the project web site.

6. INTERREG IVC projects

a) Basic facts

As a result of a work visit conducted under the Rio Conventions Project in Cornwall, UK in November 2007 MRDPW became a partner in three projects, funded by the EU programme for interregional cooperation INTERREG IVC⁷. All three proposals were drafted with the technical

⁶ <http://www.rioconventions.org/en/Publications/Rio-Conventions-Project-Publications.html>

⁷ <http://www.interreg4c.net>.

support of RCP PMU. Two of the funded projects coordinated by DG SRDPATO – RSC and UNICREDS are already well established and in full implementation at the ministry. The third one - GEOWPOWER project focusing on the use of geothermal energy in industrial and multifamily buildings – was submitted for review in 5 March, 2010 and awaits approval from INTERREG IVC secretariat in September 2010. A brief description of the 3 projects is attached in **Annex 2** to this document.

b) Initiatives towards ensuring the sustainability

Concrete actions to be undertaken till the project end:

- Transfer all documentation related to applications for INTERREG IVC funding to the designated staff members at DG SRDPATO at MRDPW.

7. Update and midterm evaluation of District Development Strategies

a) Basic facts

At the end of 2009, in consultation with MRDPW and UNDP, PMU made a decision to focus the forthcoming assignments under the project pilot component (component 3) on the 28 District Administrations in Bulgaria instead on the 6 regions from NUTS 2 level due to the prolonged negotiations between MRDPW and MoEW about the need for a second EA of the 6 RDPs (as a result of the changes in RDA from August 2008) and the uncertain result from those negotiations. In March 2010 MRDPW and Plovdiv District Administration (DA) signed a MoU for the update of the District Development Strategy of Plovdiv District and the project hired a team of three consultants to perform the required update. Plovdiv DA was selected for the pilot on the basis of a number of technical and operational criteria agreed with project expert group on indicators and PSC members. The assignment shall also produce Procedural Guidelines about the process of update which shall serve as a model to the remaining 27 DAs how to perform the required updates of the respective DDS. The MoU was signed following a recommendation from the project MTE which required that: "... a stronger partnership be developed at the start of the demonstration activity (prior to the selection of the region/municipalities) to maximize the stakeholder participation in the demonstration and by extension the ownership of the project achievements" (Recommendation #4).

In April, 2010 RCP PMU, in consultation with UNDP and MRDPW, initiated an assignment for producing model tender documents (ToR) and Methodology for performing a midterm evaluation of the 28 DDS as required by the RDA. The assignment was initiated on the basis of actual demand for such a technical assistance demonstrated by the DAs themselves and a letter sent to the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, requesting such a support. This ultimate assignment shall be used by the project to further integrate the project developed indicators and global environmental issues related to the implementation of the Rio Conventions in Bulgaria in strategic planning documents at the district level.

b) Initiatives towards ensuring the sustainability

Concrete actions to be undertaken till the project end:

- Perform an update of Plovdiv DDS and produce Procedural Guidelines on the process of update to be used by the remaining 27 DAs in Bulgaria.
- Hold a public hearing of the proposed update of Plovdiv DDS.
- Develop model Terms of Reference (ToR) and Methodological Guidelines for conducting midterm evaluation of the DDS implementation
- Organize two regional work meetings with representatives from the 28 DAs to obtain their feedback as to the proposed ToR and Methodological Guidelines.

8. Update of job descriptions at MRDPW

a) Basic facts

An assignment entitled *Review of Relevant Job Descriptions and Evaluation Procedures of Employees at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works* was conducted in the period September – December 2008. As a result, detailed Recommendations for the update of relevant job descriptions and evaluation procedures at MRDPW were produced and officially submitted to the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works in February 2009 with a letter of UNDP Resident Representative. Subsequently, a new Ordinance of Internal Order for MRDPW was enacted by the Council of Ministers in November 2009, which made some changes in directorates and job descriptions at the ministry. Therefore, the project initiated a short-term assignment during February and March, 2010 and produced an update of the Recommendations in accordance with the new structure at the ministry. The update of the recommendations was also officially submitted to the Chief Secretary of the MRDPW.

b) Initiatives towards ensuring the sustainability

Concrete actions to be undertaken till the project end and beyond:

- Support as relevant DG SRDPATO to update the job descriptions and staff evaluation procedures of the experts employed at the Directorate and its 6 territorial units.

9. Activities, which do not need further development towards ensuring sustainability

Throughout its implementation the project has also conducted a number of assignments for which no further interventions in terms of ensuring sustainability are deemed necessary. Some of those assignments were “the basis” and provided the necessary background information for the project pilot component, which is under implementation during the project terminal year. Those activities included:

- *Designing a Methodology for Measuring MRDPW Financial Contribution Throughout the Implementation of the Rio Conventions Project.* The assignment was completed in May 2009 and aimed at developing a methodology for measuring MRDPW’s financial contribution towards RCP. As specified in the Main Project Document the financial contribution of MRDPW amounted to USD 1,029,000 and entailed a commitment on behalf of the ministry to finance the implementation of projects (through OPRD and other relevant funding schemes under the management of MRDPW) that contribute towards the implementation of the three Rio Conventions in Bulgaria. On the basis of the developed

methodology a short list of 20 projects funded by OPRD, Phare Cross-border Cooperation Program and ISPA program were selected and submitted to GEF as part of the 3rd PIR in July, 2009 to be counted towards MRDPW's contribution to the project.

- *Development of a Model Monitoring and Control Report for 2008 on the Implementation of the Prescribed Measures from the Initial Ecological Assessment of the Six Regional Development Plans in Bulgaria.* The assignment was implemented between April and October, 2009 and it produced a model structure for the annual Monitoring and Control reports regarding the impact on the environment from the implementation of the 6 RDPs, as required by the EA Ordinance. The structure of the report was agreed with MoEW and the first Monitoring and Control Reports were submitted and successfully approved by MoEW in December 2009.
- *Developing Technical Specifications and Economic Analysis of Seven Indicators Related to UN Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Land Desertification to Support MRDPW in Integration of Global Environmental Issues in Strategic Planning Documents.* The assignment was completed in November, 2009 and produced detailed “passports” for the 7 project developed indicators in terms of data provision and verification, periods of data collection, reference values for the indicators in Bulgaria with respect to regional development, etc. The “passports” are available both in English and Bulgarian from the *Publications* section of the project web site. In February, 2010, they were also sent to DG Regional Development at MRDPW (responsible for the implementation of OPRD) to be considered, and potentially adopted as part of the monitoring process of OPRD implementation, during the forthcoming midterm evaluation of the operational programme.
- *“Development of GIS “Passports” for 5 Indicators Supporting MRDPW in the Integration of Global Environmental Objectives into Regional Development and Spatial Planning in Bulgaria”.* The assignment was completed in December 2009 and produced the technical specifications for 5 of the project developed indicators which would be integrated in the prototype GIS.

III. Transfer of project assets

1) Project property (refurbishment of premises, equipment & furniture)

A list with project property in full is provided as an *Annex 3*.

Despite the fact that the main Project Document does not directly determine the way in which the transfer of project owned equipment and premises is performed, as it is the usual procedure with all GEF funded and UNDP managed projects after the implementation of the project, the non-expendable equipment purchased for the needs of the PMU will be transferred from UNDP to the implementing partner – the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works upon the condition that the equipment will be used for the same or similar purposes.

2) Intangible assets

a) Transfer of Project Know How

In addition to the transfer of the project property (equipment and furniture) described in the previous section, all project collected and produced information (i.e. printed materials, CDs, web sites) including the information from the GIS system developed and licenses purchased for the needs of MRDPW is to be transferred to designated stakeholders as described below.

Suggestion:

Publications (as per Annex 4)

The project know how for all publications could be transferred to the **Directorate General “Strategic Regional Development Planning and Administrative-Territorial Organization” and National Project Director at MRDPW (DG SRDPATO)**, so it can reproduce and or update materials/publications, after the project end.

Training manuals, handbooks and Power Point Presentations (PPTs)

The project know how for all training manuals, handbooks and PPTs in Bulgarian language could be transferred to the **Faculty of Geology and Geography at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski**, so it can reproduce and/or up-date materials, as necessary and appropriate, after the project end under the condition that GEF and UNDP contribution is recognized on each instance of the materials use and update.

Web sites

The project web site (www.rioconventions.org) could be transferred to the **Bulgarian NGO Climate Coalition coordinated by BlueLink Information Network**, so it can maintain it and update it after the project end. Visibility of project results shall be ensured by the commitment of MRDPW and MoEW to continue providing a link to the project web site via the web sites of the two ministries, as it was a practice during the project implementation.

The project know how for the training courses web site (<http://gis.gea.uni-sofia.bg/mmgis/rioconventions>) could be transferred to the **Faculty of Geology and Geography at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski**, so it can maintain it and up-date it after the project end. The Faculty was directly involved in the courses development and delivery and could maintain the web site in order to continue advertising it to interested stakeholders.

b) Project developed prototype GIS for 5 (five) indicators on integration of global environmental objectives into strategic planning documents related to regional development and spatial planning

Rio Conventions Project GIS dataset contains:

Software: Software applications include ESRI’s ***ArcView 9.3.1 concurrent*** license for one year (till 31 May, 2011).

Digital datasets:

1. A GIS layer with road networks and railways
2. A GIS layer with territorial units and regions from NUTS 1 and 2, LAU 1 and 2 levels
3. A GIS layer with protected areas in accordance with the Bulgarian legislature
4. A GIS layer with basic transport infrastructure (marine ports, terminals, airports, railway stations)
5. A GIS layer with Natura 2000 network – Birds and Habitats Directive

6. A GIS layer with the most recent data from Corine landcover project.

Digital maps:

1. Administrative and territorial division
2. Territorial base of the regional planning system in accordance with RDA
3. Geographic map of Bulgaria
4. Protected areas in accordance with the Biodiversity Act and Natura 2000 network
5. Population distribution
6. Unemployment
7. Educational infrastructure
8. Transport access to the district/municipal centers
9. Land use
10. Administrative and geographic map of the NUTS 2 regions.

Suggestion: As per the provisions of the Main Project Document, the project shall hand over the prototype GIS and licenses, the GIS data sets and maps to DG SRDPATO at MRDPW.

IV. Project finalization and the final public events

1) Final evaluation of the Project and Final Project Report

A final project evaluation shall take place in July and August, 2010 to assess the success of the overall project results and strategy. A team of international and local consultant shall conduct the independent evaluation and shall base their findings on an extensive review of key project reports and deliverables, as well as on face-to-face meetings with key project stakeholders.

2) Lessons learned and best project practices

As provided for by the overall work plan, the project will prepare a lessons learned retrospective for the whole duration of the project. Best project practices will be formulated and these coupled with the lessons learned will serve for the preparation of a final project brochure/booklet. The brochure would be prepared both in English and Bulgarian and will be disseminated both nationally and internationally. It will be distributed to project's main stakeholders and will be uploaded on the UNDP and project websites. Finally, it will be shared internationally with the support of UNDP country office in Bratislava, Slovakia and through the GEF database of capacity building projects in the same area.

3) Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meetings

Two PSCs meetings shall take place before the project official closure. During the first meeting PMU shall seek for a preliminary feedback and approval of the proposed Exit Plan. The final PSC meeting shall precede the final stakeholder meeting and shall acquaint the PSC members with the major recommendations from the project final evaluation and finalized Exit strategy.

4) Final stakeholder (Advisory Board) meeting

The final stakeholder meeting shall take place in mid-September, 2010 prior to the official project closure. The event shall gather representatives from all major stakeholder groups and institutions with which the project worked over the four years of its operation, both on national and international level. An opportunity shall be also sought through UNDP regional center in Bratislava to invite representatives from other similar and on-going capacity building projects implemented in SEE and NIS.

ANNEX 1 Action Plan for the implementation of the Exit Strategy

Areas of concern	Key actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	Status	Comment
Institutional sustainability					
PSC meetings	Organize first PSC meeting and agreement on the first draft of the Exit Strategy and Action Plan	June 2010	PMU, UNDP PSC members	In progress	
	Organize second PSC meeting and agreement on the recommendations from the Final Project Evaluation and finalized Exit Strategy	Sept 2010	PMU, UNDP PSC members	Pending	
Sustainability of specific project outputs and activities					
Training programme	Draft and sent a proposal to IPA to include the project developed Introductory and Core course in its training catalogue for state employees for 2011	Sept 2010	PMU, UNDP	Pending	
GIS prototype	Organize a RFQ procedure and purchase the necessary GIS licenses to ensure the proper testing and installation of the developed prototype	April-June, 2010	PMU, UNDP	In progress	
	Complete the development and testing of the prototype	June 2010	PMU, MRDPW	In progress	
	Develop a training manual and hold one-day training for designated MRDPW employees	June 2010	PMU, MRDPW	In progress	
Web site	Hold meetings with the Bulgarian NGO climate coalition (climatebg.org) to integrate the project web site within the existing Climate portal	April – June 2010	PMU	In progress	
	Provide basic training to representatives from the climate coalition regarding the maintenance of the project web site: e.g. upload of news,	Aug – Sept 2010	PMU	Pending	

	banners, links, etc.				
Electronic database and newsletter	Produce and send two more issues of the RCP Electronic newsletter and send a farewell and thank you note in the last newsletter to all project stakeholders who contributed to the project	June and Sept 2010	PMU	Pending	
Publications	Transfer all remaining hard copy publications to DG SRDPATO at MRDPW and the Information Center of MoEW, including final project brochure	Sept 2010	PMU, MRDPW, MoEW	Pending	
INTERREG IVC projects	Transfer all documentation related to applications for INTERREG IVC funding to the designated staff members at DG SRDPATO at MRDPW.	Sept 2010	PMU, MRDPW	Pending	
Update and midterm evaluation of District Development Strategies	Perform an update of Plovdiv DDS and produce Procedural Guidelines on the process of update to be used by the remaining 27 DAs in Bulgaria	April – July 2010	PMU, MRDPW, Plovdiv DA	In progress	
	Hold a public hearing of the proposed update of Plovdiv DDS	June 2010	PMU, MRDPW, Plovdiv DA	Pending	
	Develop model Terms of Reference (ToR) and Methodological Guidelines for conducting midterm evaluation of the DDS implementation	April – July 2010	PMU, MRDPW	In progress	
	Organize two regional work meetings with representatives from the 28 DAs to obtain their feedback as to the proposed ToR and Methodological Guidelines	April – July 2010	PMU, MRDPW	Pending	
Update of job descriptions at	Support DG SRDPATO to update the job descriptions and staff evaluation	April-Sept 2010	PMU, MRDPW	In progress	

MRDPW	procedures of the experts employed at the Directorate and its 6 territorial units.				
Transfer of project assets					
Project property	Handing over of furniture, equipment, GIS prototype and licenses to MRDPW	Sept 2010	PMU, UNDP	Pending	
Intangible assets	Transfer of project know how on publications, training materials and websites to MRDPW, Sofia University and NGO Climate Coalition	Sept 2010	PMU, UNDP	Pending	
Project Finalization and Public Events					
Final evaluation of the project and Final Project Report	Develop ToR for final evaluation; identify a team of consultants (international and national)	April-June 2010	PMU	In progress	
	Undertake final evaluation	July-August 2010	PMU, UNDP, MRDPW	Pending	
	Prepare Final Project Report	August – Sept, 2010	PMU and UNDP	Pending	
Lessons learned and best project practices	Prepare lessons learned retrospective	July – Aug 2010	PMU	Pending	
	Print final lessons learned project brochure in English and Bulgarian	August – September, 2010	PMU	Pending	
Final Stakeholder meeting (ABM)	Organize final stakeholder meeting	September 2010	PMU	Pending	

Annex 2. Description of INTERREG IV C Projects initiated with the support of Rio Conventions Project and implemented by Directorate General “Strategic Regional Development Planning and Administrative-Territorial Organization” at MRDPW

Regions for Sustainable Change project (RSC), www.rscproject.org

The project kick-off meeting took place in December, 2008 in Szentendre, Hungary. The main goal of the “*Regions for Sustainable Change*” Project is to develop the potential of the regions in the EU for adaptation to and counteracting climate change. The RSC partnership aims to promote an EU-wide shift to climate-friendly economies by developing the potential of regions to stimulate mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The project consortium consists of 12 partners from Hungary, United Kingdom, Austria, Spain, Bulgaria, Italy, Malta and Poland. On Bulgarian side, a project partner is the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW). The total budget of the project is 2,153,526.63 EUR and the approved budget for project activities in Bulgaria is 120,347.71 EUR. The project shall run till 31 Dec, 2011.

University Cooperation for Regional Development (UNICREDS) Project

The project kick-off meeting took place in February, 2010 in Brussels, Belgium. The main theme of the project is the support of higher education for regional development in order to increase growth and employment in less developed regions in EU, including Bulgaria. Fifteen partners from UK, Sweden, Hungary, Bulgaria, Scotland, Finland and Czech Republic participate in the project. Partners on the Bulgarian side are the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and Sofia University. The partnering organizations will focus on the development of a set of specific research activities for exchange of experience, identification of good practices and development of closer relations between regions, their universities and the private sector for maximum benefits for the region. The total budget of the project is 2,291,854 EUR and the approved budget for project activities in Bulgaria is 96,259 EUR. The project shall run till 31 Dec, 2012.

GEOthermal Energy to Address energy performance strategies in residential and industrial buildings (GEOPOWER) Project

In February, 2010 PMU supported MRDPW in preparing and submitting one more project proposal under the Interreg IVC program entitled “Geopower”. As the project title indicates the major project focus would be to improve the use of geothermal energy in the housing, industrial and agricultural sectors with a specific focus on producing guidelines to be used by OPRD for funding such projects in Bulgaria within the available budgets under the OP during this and next planning periods. As an official partner to the project proposal in Bulgaria was attracted the Energy Efficiency Agency. The total budget of the project is 2,041,530 EUR and the approved budget for project activities in Bulgaria is 137,960 EUR. If approved, the project shall commence in Nov, 2010 and shall run till 31 Oct, 2012.

Annex 3. List of project premises, equipment and furniture to be transferred to MRDPW

I. Project Premises:A.

Renovation and reconstruction of office space: (two office rooms – one used by RCP PMU and the other by two experts from DG SRDPATO)

Floorage/area: 36 m² (approx)
 Working places: 4 (with structural cabling – power and LAN outlets)
 Works: Flooring, walls (renovation and repainting of existing), mounting/construction of new barring walls, mounting (with the required cabling) of lights.

B.

Construction of meeting room

Floorage/area: 18 m² (approx)
 Working places: 1 (with structural cabling – power and LAN outlets)
 Work: Flooring, walls (renovation and repainting of existing), mounting/construction of new barring / decorative walls, mounting (with the required cabling) of lights.

Total renovation and construction price (BGN): 21,948.09

II. Project Equipment:

No	Type of equipment	Acquisition date	Description	Serial No.	Source	Location	Acquisition value USD		Acquisition value BGN		Invoice No. / PO No.	State
0001	Printer	8-Dec-2006	HP Color Laser Jet 3800	CNMF15855	CNsys (AD)	MRDPW, room 601 A	818.11	(VAT Incl.)	1210.80	(VAT Incl.)	175059394 / 2006-031-POG	OK
0002	Copy Machine	8-Dec-2006	Toshiba eStudio 203 multifunctional digital copier	SCLB610917	CNsys (AD)	MRDPW, room 601 A	1760.81	(VAT Incl.)	2606.00	(VAT Incl.)	175059394 / 2006-031-POG	OK
0003	Desk top PC	8-Dec-2006	HP Compaq DX730 MT PD915 (2.8 GHz) 512 MB 160 GB DVD+/-RW XPP	HUB6450CXW	CNsys (AD)	MRDPW, room 601A,	1551.65	(VAT Incl.)	2343.00	(VAT Incl.)	175059394 / 2006-031-POG	OK
0004	Monitor		HP Compaq (PX849AA) 17" LCD Resp. time 8ms; Brigh. 300 nits; Contr. 500:1	CNC639QJCY								

0005	Fax	2-May-2007	Panasonic Model KX-FP343	6LBBB039959	Office 1 (Ted-EM OOD)	MRDPW, room 601A,	128.31		183.48		inv. 43265	OK
0006	Office Phone	2-May-2007	Panasonic Model:G30 KX-T2373FXW	7AAKCO81294	Office 1 (Ted-EM OOD)	MRDPW, room 601A,	37.34		56.39			OK
0007	LapTop Computer	9-May-2007	HP Compaq nx7400 T5600(1.83GHz) 15.4WXGA BV 100GB 1024MB	CNU7101HN1	CNsys (AD)	MRDPW, room 601A, locked cabinet	1911.89	(VAT incl.)	2734.00	(VAT incl.)	2007-011-POG	OK
0008	Digital Photo Camera	31-May-2007	Panasonic - Lumix Model DMC-LS2	WR6FB03170 R	K&K Electronix (Tecnomarket)	MRDPW, room 601A, locked cabinet	167.13	(VAT incl.)	239.00	(VAT incl.)	inv. 0310001748	OK
0009	Air Conditioning	29-Jun-2007	Osaka CH12ADE	C1G5276184 C2G533868	Milchev Sin OOD	Mounted at project premises at MRDPW (meeting room)	465.67	(VAT Incl.)	680.00	(VAT Incl.)	Inv.# - 0000000395 PO# - 2007-017-POG	OK
0010	Air Conditioning	29-Jun-2007	Osaka CH12ADE	C2G5332588 C1W533866	Milchev Sin OOD	Mounted at project premises at MRDPW (office)	465.67	(VAT Incl.)	680.00	(VAT Incl.)	Inv.# - 0000000395 PO# - 2007-017-POG	OK
0011	MM Projector	22-Jan-2009	InFocus X6	AYJJ74500675	JAR Computers	MRDPW, room 601A, locked cabinet	511.43	(VAT Incl.)	699.00	(VAT Incl.)	Inv. # 0110093779	OK

Total Acquisition Price (USD): 7818.01 / (BGN): 11,431.67

III. Project Furniture

ITEM	count	count
Computer desk	2	2
Adjacent computer desk	2	2
Documents container	2	2
Working chair	2	2
Visitor chair	4	4
Meeting table	1	1
Bookshelf, dimensions 80 x 40 x 200	1	1
Bookshelf, dimensions 80 x 40 x 85 (with doors)	1	1
Wardrobe	1	1
Meeting room table for 6 people	1	1
Meeting room visitor chairs	6	6
Meeting room visitor chairs with writing tables	12	12
Total Acquisition Price	(USD): 1,656.00	(BGN): 2,420.95

Annex 4 List of Publications and Training Manuals developed under the project

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Masters course “Planning and management of territorial systems” (2009)

By: Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Faculty of Geology and Geography

A printed Flyer of the new Masters course developed with the support of the Rio Conventions Project.

Stimulating Public Participation for Integrating Global Environmental Issues into Strategies and Plans for Regional Development and Spatial Planning in Bulgaria (2009)

Authors: Petko Kovachev, Dragomir Konstantinov, Yordan Velikov, Alexander Kodjabashev.

Editor: Pavlina Petkova

Technical Editor: Natalia Dimitrova-Popova

A printed Brochure aiming to clarify the commitments of the regional and municipal authorities on the implementation of the Rio Conventions and to present some working mechanisms for the integration of global environmental challenges, regarding the conventions, into the regional and local development.

Core Training Course Manual (2008) and Introductory Course Training Manual (2008)

Authors: Prof. Alexios Antypas, Plamen Peev, Ph.D. candidate, Keti Medarova-Bergstrom, Ph.D. candidate (available in PDF from the project web site)

Partnership and Networking (2008)

Translation: Latinka Popova

Editor: Pavlina Petkova

Technical Editors: Petyr Philev, Nataliia Dimitrova - Popova

A printed publication which summarizes best practices in management of current EU Structural Funds support through partnership, focused on inclusion of environmental partners in the programmes.

Geographical Information Systems: an Effective Informational Tool for Regional Development (2008)

Author: Maria Novakova

Editor: Pavlina Petkiova

Technical Editors: Stelian Dimitrov, Natalia Dimitrova-Popova

A printed publication presenting best practices in GIS implementation for the purpose of local and regional planning.

Database of nationally accessible information sources regarding Rio Conventions implementation in Bulgaria (2008)

Author: Stelian Dimitrov

Technical Editors: Stelian Dimitrov, Natalia Dimitrova-Popova

The CD contains a database of nationally accessible information sources regarding Rio Conventions implementation in Bulgaria.

List of Abbreviations

ABM	Advisory Board Meeting
EA	Ecological Assessment (the Bulgarian term for SEA)
EEA	Executive Environmental Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
DA	District Administration
DDS	District Development Strategy
DG SRDPATO	Directorate General “Strategic Regional Development Planning and Administrative-Territorial Organization”
FGG	Faculty of Geology and Geography (at Sofia University)
GE	Global Environment
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
IPA	Institute of Public Administration
MDPs	Municipal Development Plans
MoEW	Ministry of Environment and Water
MRDPW	Ministry for Regional Development and Public Works
MTE	Midterm Evaluation
NCSA	National Capacity Self Assessment
NEAA	National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIS	Newly Independent States
NSI	National Statistic Institute
NTTA	Natura 2000 Assessment
OPs	Operational Programs
OPRD	Operational Program for Regional Development
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPT	Power Point Presentation
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RCP	Rio Conventions Project
RDA	Regional Development Act
RDC	Regional Development Council
RFP	Request for Proposals
SC	Subcontractor
SD	Sustainable Development
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SU	Sofia University
TDA	Territorial Development Act
ToR	Terms of Reference
TP	Training Program
UD&SP	Urban Development and Spatial Planning
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change