

STANDARD SUMMARY PROJECT FICHE

Neighbourhood Programme BG-FYROM

1. Basic Information

1.1 CRIS Number 2004/016-786.01.01

1.2 Title: **GRANT SCHEME NATURE PROTECTION, VALORISATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CO-OPERATION AMONG PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AT REGIONAL/LOCAL LEVEL**

1.3 Sector: Regional Development/ CBC

1.4 Location: Cross-border region between Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective(s):

- Promote protection and valorisation of the biodiversity and cultural resources with the aim of ensuring sustainable development of the eligible cross-border region
- Create viable cross-border contacts among public institutions in the eligible cross-border area

2.2 Project purpose:

Increase the efficiency of the integrated management and the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources.

Stimulate regional cooperation and establishment of local capacity and networks.

2.3 Coherence with the Joint Programming Document 2004-06 BG-FYROM:

The project is related to two measures of the Joint Programming Document for Phare CBC/CARDS Neighbourhood Programme between the Republic of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2004-2006) namely:

PRIORITY N. 1 SUSTAINABLE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CROSS-BORDER REGION

MEASURE 1.1. MANAGEMENT AND VALORISATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

This measure focuses on the cross-border landscape, nature and culture protection, thus improving the conditions for positive development in the fields of agriculture, forestry and tourism, as well as for the development of business sites. Cooperation in these fields is supplemented by improvement of the environment encompassing all environmental areas (water, air and soil, and the use of energy). Furthermore, this measure involves the biodiversity and cultural landmarks conservation, management and awareness rising with regard to natural and cultural resources, as well as general requirements of

environmental protection: i.e. feasibility studies, monitoring systems, analysis of the environment and energy situation etc.

As foreseen in the JPD, this measure will be implemented in two phases. Phase 1, implemented in 2004 through this Project Fiche, concerns investments in the improvement of nature/culture management, including feasibility studies for future investment actions.

PRIORITY N. 2 PROMOTION OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND BUSINESSES

MEASURE 2.1. COOPERATION AMONG PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AT REGIONAL/ LOCAL LEVEL

The main purpose of the measure is to stimulate regional cooperation and establishment of local capacity and networks. Activities eligible for support under this measure include, among others: exchange of experiences on different levels and of information needed to build up institutional capacities for the preparation of projects and adoption of participative approach in the decision making process; development of spatial and regional development strategies; development and use of sustainable cross-border information systems (databases, geographical information systems etc.); joint research projects, studies and concepts for nature and landscape protection.

The proposed Grant Scheme will enable the development of joint or complementary projects with direct cross-border impact, which should be understood in terms of:

- joint development of project ideas;
- joint preparation of project application;
- joint implementation of project activities;
- joint co-financing of project activities on both sides of the border (Phare and CARDS) and assured sustainability by both cross-border partners of the results achieved.

2.4 Accession Partnership (AP) and NPAA priority:

- Further strengthening of municipalities and other public bodies at the local level, with an emphasis on access to information, air quality, waste management, water quality, nature protection, industrial pollution and risk management
- Continue integration of environmental protection requirements into the definition and implementation of all other sectoral policies so as to promote sustainable development, including in the energy sector.

2.5 Contribution to National Development Plan (and/or Structural Funds Development Plan/SDP):

The regional development of the border areas and the protection and sustainable utilization of the cross border nature correspond to the NEDP aims at achieving sustainable development of the entire border region rather than of some individual border areas.

The Project fits within the Environmental Priorities of the 4th NDP Programme of Bulgaria – Nature Conservation: conservation and restoration of key ecosystems, habitats, species, and landscape characteristics (Sub-programme 8). Priority measures to be implemented include extending and strengthening of the Protected Areas management and contributing to a national network of Protected Areas.

The Project's objectives are also parallel to the provisions of the Bulgarian National Economic Development Plan 2000-2006 for:

- Local level implementation of legislative programmes and plans;
- Institutional strengthening for Protected Areas and biodiversity conservation;
- Expanding monitoring capacity for biodiversity in Protected Areas;
- Integrating the principles of sustainable development into the production landscape and the evolving market economy; and
- Improving public understanding and involvement in processes to improve environmental performance, and resolving potential conflicts between environmental and economic development goals.

2.6 Cross-border impact

This project aims to improve and promote protection, management and valorisation of cultural heritage across the border, and better the co-ordination of institutions dealing with nature protection

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification:

As already underlined in the JPD analysis, the border area between Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is homogeneous from natural, geographical and environmental point of view and similarities can be highlighted also from the economical and cultural points of view. In this framework, and especially in the current process of EU integration, the setting up of integrated and coordinated interventions on both sides of the border are crucial for strengthening the links between institutions and people, increasing the sustainability of economic and social activities, and provision of a real basis for their further development.

The general level of environmental pollution within the cross-border programming region is rather low, partially due to the decrease in recent years of heavy industry and it is renowned both for its favourable, diverse and well-preserved nature and for relevant historical and cultural heritage. However, specific cross-border problems exist related to transport flow and its environmental impacts (international roads E-75, E-79 and E-871), solid waste endangering groundwater resources (mining, pesticides, urban), surface waters pollution (the cross-border river of Strumeshnica/ Strumica). There is a shortage of joint cross-border systems and facilities for monitoring the environmental quality and prevention of natural disasters (e.g. fires, floods etc).

Furthermore, existing potentials and resources are not yet sufficiently exploited and in this context, activities addressed to the protection of the biodiversity and valorisation of cultural resources will have direct impact on the social and economic development level of the area. Also, the future expansion of the protected areas network upon EU accession will be to a great extent oriented toward the establishment of new protected areas and special areas of conservation (e.g. Nature Parks and Protected Sites, as these categories are more flexible and promote sustainable resource use and local economic development along with the conservation and restoration of nature).

A significant challenge for the joint management of nature and culture endowments is the reconciling of stakeholder interests into a coherent, comprehensive management plans, integrating nature conservation objectives with sustainable local socio-economic development and environmental clean-up plans and programmes, and tangible benefits for the local people. Both Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are currently building up the experience for such integrated management, for the benefit of both the people and the nature.

Therefore, the aim of the present Grant Scheme is to support those activities that are targeted at setting the basis for improvement of nature/culture management and future investment actions, by means of institutional building for the preparation of projects and adoption of participative approach in the decision making process.

3.2 Sectoral rationale

N/A

3.3 Results

The overall result of the project will be a fully operational grant scheme aimed at supporting joint projects in order to reach synergies in the cross-border cooperation development, thus providing for achieving the following specific results:

- ✓ Ecologically important habitats restored and corridors settled; species and habitat inventories developed;
- ✓ Information centres equipped and information facilities settled (leaflets, brochures, films, multimedia, hands-on teaching rooms etc);
- ✓ Management and awareness-raising implemented with regard to natural resources, cultural heritage and the development of appropriate and sustainable forms of tourism under the heading of nature/ culture heritage;
- ✓ Capacity of local institutions to support the promotion of the economic development through sustainable forms of tourism improved;
- ✓ Databases, exchange of data and plans in regional development, studies, cross-border regional development programmes (concepts) etc. jointly developed and ready to be implemented;
- ✓ At least 70-80 applications received as a result of the joint Call for Proposals; and average of 8-12 projects approved and implemented;
- ✓ A pipeline of at least 30 projects with cross-border impact identified and fully prepared/ justified with feasibility studies and all other technical documentation required for further applying under joint Call for Proposals.

3.4 Activities

The following activities will be eligible under the Grant Scheme (*a detailed list of eligible activities will be developed in the "Guidelines for Applicants" that will precisely define all rules on the functioning of the GS*):

A. Investment component:

- Conservation and enhancement the accessibility of natural and cultural heritage
- Development of appropriate and sustainable forms of tourism under the natural/ cultural heritage
- Development and increase competence in prevention of natural disasters
- Development of effective monitoring of the quality of air, water and soil
- Design and implementation of renewable energy sources policy
- Feasibility studies for future investment actions (analysis of the environment and energy situation, technical support studies, concepts etc.).

B. Institutional component

- Transfer of know-how and integration of institutional/ capacity building in specific areas of common interest (e.g. approximation with the EU requirements)
- Development of cross-border spatial and regional development strategies, programmes and projects;

- Development and use of sustainable cross-border information systems (databases, geographical information systems etc.);
- Joint research projects, studies, concepts and awareness raising/ training activities related to natural resources, cultural heritage and the development of appropriate forms of economic activities

Eligibility of applicants

The potential applicants of this Grant Scheme might be national and local authorities, organisations for nature protection, regional development agencies, tourism and cultural organisations and associations.

Size of the individual grants

The following minimum and maximum amounts apply to the grants for the individual projects, which may be financed under the scheme:

Component A	Minimum	Maximum
Total	€100,000	€400,000
Phare	€ 50,000	€ 200,000
CARDS	€ 50,000	€ 200,000

Component B	Minimum	Maximum
Total	€100,000	€200,000
Phare	€ 50,000	€ 100,000
CARDS	€ 50,000	€ 100,000

Potential beneficiaries could apply for both components of the project, of which Component A is obligatory. The same project proposal must not receive more than one EC-funded grant.

Activities covered under the Grant Scheme have to be in line with the national legislation and the EU requirements for Phare CBC/CARDS Neighbourhood Programmes. **The maximum project duration** of a single project under this grant scheme will be **12 months**.

A grant may not exceed 90 % of the total project costs. The balance must be financed from the applicant's or partners' own resources, or from sources other than the European Community budget.

Detailed eligibility and selection criteria will be given within the Guidelines for Applicants. The applicant organisations must be registered in the eligible border region.

General criteria for eligibility:

Only the projects falling into one of the following categories should be considered eligible to the grant scheme

- Simple projects with a cross-border effect taking place mostly or exclusively on one side of the border but for the benefit of both partners;
- Complementary projects where an activity on one side of the border is accompanied by a similar activity on the other side;
- Integrated projects where partners on either side of the border contribute different elements to a single project.

Relevance:

- Relevance to the particular needs and constraints of the cross-border region (including conformity with regional development plans and the Joint Programming Document);
- Compliance with the objectives of this grant scheme. The applicants must justify that the proposed projects are adapted to the demands of the cross-border region;
- Clearly defined, strategically chosen target groups. Relevance of the projects to the needs of the target group;
- Coherent, appropriate and practical character of the CBC activities proposed;
- Specific elements of added value in the projects, such as innovative approaches, and models for good practice.

Methodology:

- The preparedness and elaboration of the project proposals (including preparedness for evaluation);
- Involvement and activity of the cross-border partners in the elaboration and implementation of the project proposals;
- The realistic implementation of the time-schedule and action plan of the project proposals;
- Objectively verifiable indicators for the project outcomes, methodology for follow- up of the project results.

Sustainability:

- Guaranteed (financial and institutional) sustainability of the developments implemented through the grant scheme;
- Beneficial social, economic and environmental impacts of the project results;
- Possible multiplier effects of the project results (including possibilities for extension of project outcomes).

Budget and cost effectiveness:

- Reality and transparency of the financial plan of the project proposal;
- Justification of the planned budget;
- Cost effectiveness of the development.

Management capacity and expertise:

- Availability of the necessary personal and organisational capacity and expertise for the project management (including the previous experience in similar projects);
- Availability of the necessary personal and organisational capacity and expertise for the technical realisation of the proposal (i.e. knowledge of issues to be addressed).

Projects should achieve at least one of the following desirable outcomes:

- Explore ways of pursuing concurrently the principle of sustainable development and of breaking down barriers that can act as obstacles to sustainability in the border region
- Develop models for the sustainable management of the countryside across the border
- Generate greater awareness and understanding of sustainable development
- Work through individuals, businesses and community groups to deliver the programme
- Encourage participation of young people in the scheme

3.5 Linked Activities:

Bulgaria has concluded agreements on cross-border cooperation with Greece (since 1994, € 20 million Phare CBC funds per year) and Romania (since 1999, € 8 million Phare CBC funds per year) in the framework of programmes Phare-CBC/INTERREG. In anticipation of the future EU external borders, an External Border Facility Programme of € 3.12 million was allocated in 2003 to prepare new cross-border

cooperation programmes from 2004 onwards between Bulgaria and Turkey, Serbia & Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has also significant experience in the development of EU cross-border cooperation with its Greek neighbours (€ 37 million during the period 1996-1999)

At the local level, there is a strong political will to develop cross-border projects and create new sustainable structures like "Euroregions" across the borders of Serbia, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria, between the cities of Nish, Skopje and Sofia and their neighbouring regions. Also, more regular meetings of some local officials exist; there are concrete projects or ideas but need a better frame to implement them.

3.6 Lessons learned:

The project is the first of this type to be implemented between the two neighbouring countries with joint EU funding (Phare and CARDS). In regard to that, no specific lessons could be reported which to be closely linked with the present project and the respective Neighbourhood Programme. However, the previous experience of both countries under various other programmes could provide enough evidence for the achieved up to now.

Experience obtained from past and ongoing projects, especially experience from implementation of cross-border actions (and mostly those with grant schemes implementation), will be applied as much as possible. Experience gained from such programmes has shown that in-depth preparation of the Call for Proposals is needed. Further attention should be paid with the present NP, when this should be done jointly between the two countries. The successful utilization of funds under grant scheme type of operation depends mostly on the efficient capacity built not only at central level, but also at local and regional level where the actual implementation is carried out.

The outcomes of the assessment of CBC programmes in Bulgaria (recently carried out by the EMS) were also taken into account. The need for coordination (preparation and publishing the timely adjusted joint Call for Proposal, joint evaluation of applications received and contracting) and supervision of project implementation has been taken into consideration during the programming phase and will be carefully watched in the course of programme implementation.

4. Institutional Framework

Key elements in the Neighbourhood Programme (NP) are the joint programming process, the combination of Phare CBC and CARDS funds, the joint management structures, the joint call for proposals and the joint selection process.

The GS institutional framework is based on the principle of both countries being equal partners and with both countries having an equal role in the management structures. The joint management will ensure local ownership, wider involvement, better planning and will create the base for genuine cross-border activities.

As described in the JPD, the management structures will include: (a) the national authorities responsible for Programme co-ordination (Implementing Agency in Bulgaria, and Project Coordination Unit (PCU) in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia; (b) the Joint Cooperation Committee and the Joint Steering Committee; (c) assisted by a Joint Technical Secretariat.

On the Bulgarian side, the responsibilities for Phare-CBC Programme are laid down with the Implementing Agency Phare – ESC/ CBC at the **Ministry of Regional Development and Public**

Works. It will be acting as a Contracting Authority with the overall responsibility for the programme implementation, as well as administrative, technical and financial management of the grant scheme. MRDPW as a coordinator for CBC programme is obliged also to monitor the physical and financial implementation of this project including Phare and co-financing payments, and report to the EC in regularly reports.

The MRDPW will ensure necessary human resources for the technical management of the GS and may delegate specific tasks to the **Joint Technical Secretariat** established in accordance with the JPD provisions and strictly following the PRAG rules.

5. Detailed Budget

Year 2004	Phare Support			National Co-financing*	IFI*	TOTAL
	Investment Support	IB	Total Phare (=I+IB)			
Component A	€ 900,000		€ 900,000	€ 300,000		€ 1,200,000
Component B		€ 600,000	€ 600,000			€ 600,000
TOTAL	€ 900,000	€ 600,000	€ 1,500,000	€ 300,000		€ 1,800,000

*The necessary co-financing for this project will be provided from the Bulgarian national budget.

With regard to the NP requirements for joint development, implementation and co-financing, the joint project ideas will be financed through both Phare and CARDS for the respective activities of the both sides of the border. The indicative CARDS allocations for this grant scheme are as follows:

Year 2004	CARDS Support			IFI*	TOTAL
	Investment Support	IB	Total CARDS (=I+IB)		
Component A	€ 450,000		€ 450,000		€ 450,000
Component B		€ 300,000	€ 300,000		€ 300,000
TOTAL	€ 450,000	€ 300,000	€ 750,000		€ 750,000

* CARDS co-financing will be provided by the applicants. The minimum co-financing requirements for CARDS are as follows:

- 10% co-financing for projects between € 50,000 – € 300.000
- 25% for more than € 300.000
- 5% for less than € 50,000

6. Implementation Arrangements

The Republic of Bulgaria

Implementing Agency

Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works

Address: 17-19 Cyril and Methodius St. 1202 Sofia

Director: Tzvetomira Lacheva – Deputy PAO

Contact Person: Silvia Teneva, acting Head of Phare CBC Department
Phone: +359 2 9405-280, +359 2 9405-377
Fax: +359 2 987 0737
E-mail: steneva@mrrb.government.bg

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Contracting Authority

European Agency for Reconstruction
Makedonija 11/I, 1000 Skopje
Tel: + 389 2 328 6782
Fax: + 389 2 312 4760

The Grant Scheme will operate on the basis of single call for proposals and single selection process covering both sides of the border. **The Grant Scheme will be implemented according to the NP Implementing Guidelines issued by the Commission.** Except when provided differently in the Implementing Guidelines, the award procedures provided in the PRAG will be implemented.

The standard and basic selection, implementation and monitoring process will be as follows:

PREPARATION OF THE PACKAGE OF CALL FOR PROPOSAL, GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS AND APPLICATION FORM ACCORDING TO THE PRACTICAL GUIDE

- The JTS, under the supervision of the JSC, drafts the Call for proposals, the Guidelines for applicants and the Application form and other documents related to the implementation of the grant schemes.
- BG IA and FYROM PCU submit the final version of the documents to the respective EC Delegation/EAR for approval

PUBLICATION OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSAL

The BG IA and the FYROM PCU, with the assistance of the Joint Technical Secretariat, take all appropriate measures to ensure that the nationally and regionally publicised call for proposals reaches the target groups in line with the requirements of the Practical Guide.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

- The Joint Technical Secretariat collects and registers incoming project proposals.
- The BG IA and the FYROM PCU designate a joint Evaluation Committee for the assessment of administrative compliance, eligibility and assessment of technical and financial quality of proposals.
- Members of the joint Evaluation Committee come from both countries. A balanced membership from either side of the border is required. Members of the joint Evaluation Committee are designated exclusively on the basis of technical and professional expertise in the relevant area.
- The EC Delegation and EAR endorse the composition of the joint Evaluation Committee. The EC Delegation and EAR will participate as observer in the proceedings of the joint Evaluation Committee. Prior approval is needed from the Delegation/EAR for the participation of other observers.
- If necessary, the Evaluation Committee could be assisted by Assessors designated by the BG IA and the FYROM PCU and endorsed by the EC Delegation and EAR.

- The joint Evaluation Committee assesses each proposal on the basis of the published evaluation grid, draws up its recommendations and decisions in the form of an evaluation report and transmit it to the Joint Steering Committee
- The Joint Steering Committee formally ratifies the evaluation report and the award proposals and transmits them (with recommendations, as appropriate) to the BG IA and the FYROM PCU for onwards transmission to the EC Delegation and EAR. The JSC is not entitled to change the Evaluation Committee's scores or recommendation and must not alter the evaluation grids completed by the evaluators.
- The EC Delegation and EAR approve the evaluation report on the selection process and the final list of grants to be awarded.
- The JTS notifies each applicant in writing of the result of the selection process.

CONTRACTING

- The format of the grant contract is drafted according to the Practical Guide using the standard grant contract format and its annexes.
- The format of the grant contract is to be approved by the EC Delegation and EAR.

Given the different financial rules applicable to each side of the border (decentralised versus centralised), the contracting procedures will be different for the projects (or part of them) co-financed by Phare CBC or Cards:

In the Republic of Bulgaria:

- The EC Delegation only approves the evaluation report, the list of proposed projects (budget, duration, beneficiaries etc as per Practical Guide), and the standard contract format, not the contracts themselves irrespective of their budget.
- The IAs sign the grant contracts with the selected beneficiaries based on the final list of Phare CBC grants approved by the EC Delegation. The language of the grant contract is English.
- The grant contracts should normally be issued within 3 months of the decision of the Joint Steering Committee/IA
- Copy of the signed grant contracts will be available at the Bulgarian IA

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

- The EAR formally confirms the decision of the Joint Steering Committee/PCU.. In all cases, the EAR retains the right of final approval of projects (or part of projects) co-financed by Cards. In doing so, it will ascertain that the conditions for Community financing are met.
- The EAR issues the grant contracts with the selected beneficiaries from the side of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia , normally within 3 months of the decision of the Joint Steering Committee/PCU

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELECTED PROJECTS BY THE BENEFICIARIES

- Beneficiaries subcontract suppliers of goods or services, in line with Phare procurement regulations annexed to the Grant Contract and under the Practical Guide (PRAG).

- The projects will be subject to ex-post control by the EC Delegation and EAR pursuant to the Practical Guide.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE SELECTED PROJECTS

The JTS will collect and verify the technical reports and requests for payments from the beneficiaries and forward them to the relevant Contracting Authority for payment (Bulgarian IA for Phare CBC and EAR for CARDS).

MONITORING OF THE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY THE BENEFICIARIES

Project implementation will be monitored through the Joint Steering Committee. The project monitoring and reporting process will be harmonised so that all projects will be monitored according to standard procedures. Project monitoring and evaluation will be based on periodic assessment of progress on delivery of specified project results and towards achievement of project objectives. All reporting and evaluation must differentiate between Phare CBC and Cards expenditure, although in the framework of a single reporting structure. Monitoring reports are submitted to the Joint Co-operation Committee. Attention is drawn to the special duty of the Joint Technical Secretariat with regard to the day-to-day monitoring of the selected projects.

The EC Delegation and EAR reserve the right to organise field visits and to monitor on a case-by-case basis the projects selected under the grants schemes.

6.1 Twinning

N/A

6.2 Non-standard aspects

There are no “non-standards aspects”. “Practical Guide to contract procedures financed from the General Budget of the European Communities in the context of external actions” will strictly be followed.

6.3 Contracts

The grant scheme will be implemented via one single (joint) Call for Proposals simultaneously launched in Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The number of the individual grant-contracts to be signed will vary depending on the number of the proposals received for each component and the respective grant amounts approved for funding. The number of the contracts to be signed under each of the 2 components will be limited to the maximum indicative amount as given in the project indicative budget allocation (item 5 of the project fiche).

7. Implementation Schedule

7.1 Call for proposals

February 2005

7.2 Start of project activity

September 2005

7.3 Project completion

September 2006

8. Equal Opportunity

Being focused on cohesion, interactions and networking, the project also aims at widening the range of development opportunities in favour to those categories of people that have a scarce access to them: women, young people, weaker spheres of population, minorities and groups. The stimulus to set up networks and interactions in a cross-border dimension together with the know-how exchange and dialogue among the local actors and institutions throughout the border is seen in the light of social cohesion and equal opportunities. Therefore, the project will contribute to the equal opportunities referring to gender.

9. Environment

Specifically within the framework of this project it is pursued a form of development through investments and infrastructures that is based on the principles of environment protection and preservation. The necessity to adjust old infrastructures and conceive new ones in line with principles of sustainability is considered a priority.

The project emphasis the nature protection and sustainable development in the cross-border region, thus it is expected to have positive impact on long-term biodiversity conservation and Natura 2000 site protection in the area. The resultant development activities should have no negative impact on the environment.

10. Rates of return

The individual project applications submitted for grants shall determine the rate of return of individual investments in the form of indicators.

11. Investment criteria

11.1 Catalytic effect

The following catalytic effects are foreseen:

- Improvement of biodiversity conservation effectiveness of the region;
- Inflow of know-how through project cooperation;
- Strengthening cross-border links between conservation institutions;
- Creation of job opportunities;
- Improving social and cultural welfare.

The implementation of projects will stimulate and create a positive environment for further cooperation.

11.2 Co-financing

The grant scheme will be jointly co-financed between EU Phare and CARDS, while additional co-financing resources will be provided both by the Bulgarian and FYROM partners. The rate of the generally available maximum support (Phare/CARDS and national co-financing) is 90 % of the total cost of the projects to be supported.

11.3 Additionality

The grants awarded under this scheme will not displace any other financial sources. Supported investments and programmes will not displace private financial sources, as they do not generate financial profit.

11.4 Project readiness and size

A draft of the Cooperation Agreement, Call for Proposal, Application form, Guidelines for applicants and Grant Contracts will be elaborated by the JTS by the time of signing the Financing Memorandum. All documents shall be prepared according to the PRAG template and submitted to the ECD/EAR for endorsement prior to the launch of the Call for Proposals.

11.5 Sustainability

Long-term sustainability will be one of the selection criteria for projects. Only organisations being able to prove the sustainability of results achieved (financially, institutionally) will be supported.

11.6 Compliance with state aids provisions

All actions financed by Phare will respect the state aid and competition provisions of the Europe Agreement.

12. Conditionality and sequencing

The project will start after signing of the Financial Memorandum between Bulgaria and the European Union for 2004. All documentation required for launching joint Call for Proposals (Application Pack) will be prepared by the JTS by December 2004 and will be submitted to the respective EC Delegation/EAR for approval. After obtaining the formal endorsement of the Application Pack the grant scheme implementation will start in accordance with the provision of item 6.1 of the project fiche.

Annexes to Project Fiche:

1. Logical Framework in standard format
2. Detailed implementation chart
3. Contracting and disbursement schedule

ANNEX 1

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR Project Title: GRANT SCHEME NATURE PROTECTION, VALORISATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CO_OPERATION AMONG PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AT REGIONAL/LOCAL LEVEL		Programme name and number 2004/016-786.01.01	
		Contracting period expires 30/11/2006	Disbursement period expires 30/11/2007
		Total budget: €1,800,000	Phare budget: €1,500,000
Overall objective(s)	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote protection and valorisation of the biodiversity and cultural resources with the aim of ensuring sustainable development of the eligible cross-border region. Create viable cross-border contacts among public institutions in the eligible cross-border area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased environmental awareness of the population Increased management capacities and tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports and studies Evaluation Reports 	
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the efficiency of the integrated management and the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources. Stimulate regional cooperation and establishment of local capacity and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase (%) of the formal/informal contacts, forums, cooperation agreements and structures in the cross-border area between environmental organisations and local authorities Improvement of the participatory approach among border institutions and LDO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EC Interim Evaluation Reports Monitoring Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Government commitment to developing cross-border cooperation Favourable economic and social environment Unpredictable local hindrance impeding economic activity in the target area does not exist or will not emerge
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecologically important habitats restored and corridors settled; species and habitat inventories developed; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of interventions on environmental protection and monitoring activity Number of involved municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project progress reports Monitoring and evaluation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public organisations and economic actors realize the importance of cross-border cooperation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information centres equipped and information facilities settled (leaflets, brochures, films, multimedia, hands-on teaching rooms etc); Management and awareness-raising implemented with regard to natural resources, cultural heritage and the development of appropriate and sustainable forms of tourism under the heading of nature/ culture heritage; Capacity of regional and local institutions to support the promotion of the economic development through sustainable forms of tourism improved; Databases, exchange of data and plans in regional development, studies, cross-border regional development programmes (concepts) etc. jointly developed and ready to be implemented At least 70-80 applications received as a result of the joint Call for Proposals; and average of 8-12 projects approved and implemented; A pipeline of at least 30 projects with cross-border impact identified and fully prepared/ justified with feasibility studies and all other technical documentation required for further applying under joint Call for Proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of networks set up Number of studies and inventories done and visually exposed; Number of management plans prepared Number of new forms of work organisation in nature protected areas implemented; Number of partnerships forms developed and implemented; Number of ecologically important habitats restored; Number of information offices functioning; Number of information centres equipped and information packages prepared; Number of promotion campaigns organised; At least 30 projects fully prepared for future financing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The beneficiaries complete the envisaged cross-border partnership-building programmes successfully Continued interest of local and regional authorities in the development of CBC Continued interest of the target group in region for joint cooperation across the border
Activities	Means		Assumptions
<p>A. Investment component:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation and enhancement the accessibility of natural and cultural heritage Development of appropriate and sustainable forms of tourism under the natural/ cultural heritage Development and increase competence in prevention of natural disasters Development of effective monitoring of the quality 	<p>Implementation of the grant scheme in line with the provisions of the PRAG and the Vademecum on Grant Management;</p> <p>At average 8-12 individual grant contracts signed</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient number of good quality project proposals High quality project management Co-finance contributions available when required

<p>of air, water and soil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design and implementation of renewable energy sources policy ▪ Feasibility studies for future investment actions (analysis of the environment and energy situation, technical support studies, concepts etc.). <p>B. Institutional component</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer of know-how and integration of institutional/ capacity building in specific areas of common interest (e.g. approximation with the EU requirements) ▪ Development of cross-border spatial and regional development strategies, programmes and projects; ▪ Development and use of sustainable cross-border information systems (databases, geographical information systems etc.); ▪ Joint research projects, studies, concepts and awareness raising/ training activities related to natural resources, cultural heritage and the development of appropriate forms of economic activities 			
<p>The documentation, necessary for the launching of the grant scheme prepared by the signing of the FM</p>			

ANNEX 2 IMPLEMENTATION CHART

Project title: CROSS-BORDER NATURE PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME

ACTIVITIES	2004												2005												2006												20								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	#	#	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	#	#	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	#	#	#	1	2	3	4	5	6			
Draft of Guidelines for Applicants, Application Forms																																													
Guidelines for Applicants, Application Forms and Internal Procedures Guide Approved																																													
Preparing Action Plan for Publicity and Awareness																																													
Publicity and Information Strategy/Action Plan Approved																																													
Launching joint Call for Porposals																																													
Launching Publicity and Information Campaign																																													
Collection of grants proposal																																													
Evaluation of grant application																																													
Finalizing the list of selected individual grants																																													
Approval from ECD/EAR on the individual grants to be funded																																													
Contracting individual grant projects – start of activities under the selected grants																																													
Contiunuous monitoring actions																																													
End of Project																																													

ANNEX 3
CONTRACTING AND DISBURSEMENT SCHEDULE BY QUARTER

Project title: CROSS-BORDER NATURE PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME

CONTRACTING	Cumulative contracting schedule by quarter in € m (provisional)												
	2005				2006				2007				Total
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	
Grant Scheme			1,800										1,800
DISBURSEMENT	Cumulative disbursement schedule by quarter in € m (provisional)												
	2005				2006				2007				Total
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	
Grant Scheme - Phare funds			1,200				0,300						1,500
Grant Scheme - National funds			0,240				0,060						0,300
TOTAL			1,440				0,360						1,800