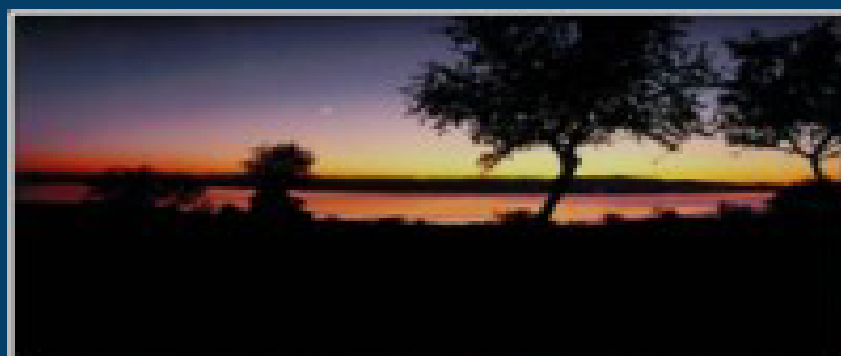


Strategic Environmental Policy Assessment — FYR of Macedonia

A review of environmental priorities for international cooperation



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List of Acronyms

BTF	Balkans Task Force of the United Nations Environment Programme
BU	Balkans Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme
CIC	Citizen Information Centre
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIC	Environmental Information Centre
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ISC	Institute for Sustainable Communities
LEAP	Local Environmental Action Plan
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MEPP	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
NBS	National Biodiversity Strategy
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan (published in 1997 for period 1997-2001)
NEAP2	2nd National Environmental Action Plan (due for publication in 2002)
NCSD	National Council for Sustainable Development
NSSD	National Strategy for Sustainable Development
REC	Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
REReP	Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SEPA	Strategic Environmental Policy Assessment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCSD	World Commission on Sustainable Development
ZELS	Association of Municipalities

Introduction

Background

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia stands on the threshold of a new and decisive phase in its history as it looks to emerge from the turmoil of armed conflicts and to begin reconstruction and development. It is at this moment that the opportunity must be seized to base plans for economic growth on the principles of sustainable development. This means integrating environmental considerations into all policy areas at all levels to ensure that everyone living in the FYR of Macedonia can breathe clean air and drink clean water. It means provision of universal and affordable access to sanitation, and solid waste disposal, and it means the conservation of the country's outstanding natural heritage. Above all, it means creating and maintaining the environmental conditions in which investment, employment, health and peace can flourish.

While this vision can only be achieved by the people and Government of FYR of Macedonia, the international community has a vital role to play. Not only in the provision of funding, capacity building and technical support, but also in pressing for environmental issues to be at the top of the development agenda. The United Nations occupies a special role within the donor community. While having access to a broad range of environmental knowledge and resources, the UN, at the same time, has the flexibility to adapt and pursue a policy agenda that closely reflects the immediate needs of the FYR of Macedonia.

As a contribution towards the realisation of sustainable development in the FYR of Macedonia this report has been prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)¹, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country office in the FYR of Macedonia. It presents the results of a Strategic Environmental Policy Assessment (SEPA) carried out in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia during September 2001. The SEPA was conducted by UNEP, in response to UNDP's formal request for a comprehensive review of environmental policy in the country.

Objectives

The SEPA was designed to address the following principal objectives:

- Identification of national needs in the environment sector with regard to policy development and implementation; and
- Identification of corresponding strategic areas for support by the international community, with particular reference to UNDP².

¹ UNEP established a Balkans Task Force (BTF) in 1999 to assess the consequences of the Kosovo conflict for the environment. The work of the BTF has been continued by the UNEP Balkans Unit, based in Geneva. Over the past two years, UNEP has carried out several post-conflict environmental assessments in the Balkans region, notably in Albania, FYR of Macedonia, and Yugoslavia (Kosovo and Serbia). These assessments, including the findings of a UNEP mission to FYR Macedonia in September 2000, are available through the following web site: <http://balkans.unep.ch/>

² UNDP's Country Cooperation Framework for 2001–2003 targets environmental support for the FYR of Macedonia towards two strategic areas: (a) strengthening the policy framework for environmental management and sustainable development; and (b) supporting the implementation of priority policy goals.

Assessment Method

The SEPA consisted of three phases:

- **Preparatory phase** (mid-August to mid-September 2001) including: (a) development of Terms of Reference agreed jointly by UNDP and UNEP, (b) technical background research and data gathering, and (c) logistical preparations for a field mission.
- **Field mission** (16-23 September 2001): a UNEP Expert Mission (see Appendix 1 for composition) visited FYR of Macedonia during the period 16-23 September, undertaking a broad programme of meetings with Government institutions, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, and the international donor community (see Appendix 2 for a complete listing). In most cases, the meetings took the form of open interviews. In addition, a round-table discussion was organised with representatives of the donor community in Skopje.
- **Mission follow-up and report preparation** (end of September to mid-November 2001): principal conclusions and recommendations were drafted before the UNEP team left the FYR of Macedonia. The team met on two further occasions to finalise its report, taking into account UNDP's comments on a draft.

Strategic Environmental Policy Assessment

UNEP has developed Strategic Environmental Policy Assessment (SEPA) as a crucial tool for securing progress in environmental governance. SEPA is independent and can be implemented quickly, providing strategic recommendations for governments, civil society, UN bodies, and the wider international community.

As a tool to assist the development and implementation of environmental policy, SEPA complements other assessment methodologies, such as the comprehensive Environmental Performance Reviews carried out by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE). It recognises that long-term solutions will be cross-sectoral in nature and based on the underlying principles of sustainable development.

Because the assessment is concise, targeted and prioritised, it will be easily accessible and digestible to a large group of users within and outside the country studied. In addition, SEPA is a relatively low-cost exercise, allowing frequent (e.g. annual) updates and monitoring of progress.

In the context of the FYR of Macedonia, as elsewhere in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, environmental issues have the potential to be builders of bridges among communities affected by armed conflict. Wise environmental stewardship is also one of the foundations for economic and social stability and has the potential to attract substantial investment and other forms of cooperation from the international donor community. The SEPA has identified both the international and national 'driving forces' for environmental policy development in FYR of Macedonia, and the obstacles and opportunities for greater synergy in these driving forces. The results of the SEPA should contribute to strengthening Macedonian implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and to advancing the environmental components of European integration.

Environmental Policy: Driving Forces and Key Actors

Introduction

In striving to develop and implement effective environmental policy, decision-makers in all countries are necessarily guided by the ever-changing backdrop of environmental, economic, and political factors at both national and international levels. As a relatively small and recently independent country recovering from the effects of regional conflicts, and whose economy is in transition, the FYR of Macedonia finds itself in a particularly complex and rapidly evolving situation. This chapter identifies those factors which are of such significance for the development and implementation of Macedonian environmental policy that they can be considered 'driving forces'. They fall into two broad categories: first, the international context (covering Multilateral Environmental Agreements, the EU Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme of the Stability Pact) and, secondly, the national context (covering the Framework Peace Agreement, the Law on Local Self Government, the National Environmental Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Strategy, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, and the privatisation process).

International Context

Multilateral Environmental Agreements

The table below shows the status of FYR Macedonia in terms of its membership of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), as of 31 October 2001.

The status of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in FYR of Macedonia

As of 31 October 2001, the FYR of Macedonia was party to the following twelve MEAs (listed in

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