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Promoting Payments for Ecosystem Services and Related Sustainable Financing Schemes in the Danube Basin

What are Payments for Ecosystem Services?

Ecosystem services are the multiple benefits that people receive from nature, such as water purification and flood control by wetlands. The Payments for Ecosystem Services schemes (PES) reward those whose lands provide these services, with subsidies or market payments from those who benefit. This could mean, for example, that downstream users of water purified by an upstream forest, such as bottling companies or local residents, pay those who manage these upstream forests to ensure a sustainable flow of this service.

Arranging payments for the benefits provided by forests, coral reefs and other natural ecosystems is a way to recognize their value and ensure that these benefits continue well beyond present generations. It encourages landowners to manage resources in a manner that ensures they continue to generate the environmental services. In addition to benefiting biodiversity, such schemes also have a potential to benefit poor landowners who manage these environmental services.

WWF is leading the development and implementation of this innovative approach to conservation.

What will this project do?

- Promote the concept of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in the Danube basin
- Encourage related Sustainable Financing schemes (SF)
- Demonstrate how national and local-level PES/SF schemes work
- Contribute to rural development and conservation in the Lower Danube basin in Romania and Bulgaria
- Integrate PES/SF schemes into the River Basin Management Plans for the Danube, its sub-basins and other major river basins
- Develop and share experience and learning with other countries in the Danube River basin, especially Serbia and Ukraine, with other major river basins and the international community.

What are the overall goals of this project?

- Make Payments for Ecosystem Services and Sustainable Financing mainstream in the Danube basin
- Show that PES and SF schemes work in large-scale international watersheds
- Secure global environmental benefits



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What is the project duration?

48 months (January 2010 – December 2013)

What is the budget for the project?

USD 2 314 049, of which:

GEF (UNEP) funding: 42%

WWF in cash contribution 48%

Partners in-kind contribution: 10%

What are the project components and expected results?

Design, development and promotion of PES and other Sustainable Financing schemes in Bulgaria and Romania

- National PES schemes in Romania and Bulgaria effectively reward provision of Danube-related ecosystem services and are integrated into the Danube River basin and sub-basin management plans
- Capacity building and training in PES and Sustainable Financing schemes for key stakeholders in Romania and Bulgaria
- Demonstration of local-level implementation of public payments for Danube-related ecosystem services
- Demonstration of private sector involvement and support for PES schemes

Capacity building for river basin managers and other key stakeholders in the wider Danube River basin and major river basins in the world

- Information and experience exchange for key stakeholders in the Danube and its sub-river basins
- Exchange of information and experience with stakeholders in selected major river basins
- Document, distribute and discuss best practices and lessons learned with the conservation and international community