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SOFIA+3 Project:Terms of reference

Background

At the 2nd Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (28-30 April 1993), Ministers of Environment for CEE and the NIS region endorsed Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe (EAP). The EAP is a set of guidelines for CEECs/NIS to identify and manage the most urgent environmental problems during the transition to a market economies. The EAP recommends that a mix of policy reforms, institutional strengthening and carefully selected and well-prepared investments is needed to cope with the underlying causes of priority problems.

Two and half years later at the 3rd Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Sofia (23-25 October 1995), Ministers of Environment endorsed the Conference Declaration in which they specifically stressed the necessity of evaluation, by the end of 1997, of the progress achieved in CEECs/ NIS in developing National Environmental Action Programmes (NEAPs). *NEAPs are government work plans* which prioritise environmental problems according to agreed and transparent criteria for achieving short and medium term environmental improvements . NEAPs contain provisions for financing planned actions, a timetable, and mechanism for evaluating progress and updating priorities.

The NGOs of Ukraine and of the other NIS countries are not widely participating in development and implementation of the National Environmental Action Plans and in Environment for Europe process as well.

Existing National Environmental Actions Plans in NIS countries still do not known widely among NGOs, do not include existing propositions of NGOs concerning the NEAPs, do not correlate with current economic activities, financial management and development of the National Governments further plans. Public' imagination about the NEAPs is very approximate. In almost all NIS countries and in Ukraine as well the NEAPs were not even discussed in Parliaments, not reflected in mass-media, and, consequently, are out of citizens attention. As a result of all this, the Environment is continuing to experience damages because of use of old technologies and work of aggressive enterprises.

The Environment for Europe NIS NGO movement is remaining very weak. The NGOs experience a great need in getting access to information related to the ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE process, in participation at international events within the process and in getting support to strengthen their activity for the Environment for Europe benefits, for Economic Gains without Environmental Losses. To be

more active, more organized and successful in the future within the NEAPs development and implementation process the NGOs need in a Common Agenda for the Future. To prevent further negative impact on Environment the wider public participation strongly needed.

Within framework of the Project the Organization "Gromagyanska Initsiatyva" (OGI) International (*in English*: the Civil Initiative International Organization) act as the leader and organizer of the Project NGO coalition joining the following NGOs:

1. "ECO-Accord" (Russia),
2. Foundation to Support Civil Initiatives in Tajikistan,
3. Natura (Moldova),
4. Ukrainian Environmental Union "Salvation from Chornobyls" (Ukraine),
5. EcoPravo-Kyiv (Ukraine),
6. Society for NGO development and support (Ukraine),
7. National Ecological Center (Ukraine),
8. New REC NGO Coordination Council of Ukraine,
9. NGO Council to the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety of Ukraine,
10. Municipal Management Center (Ukraine),
11. Institute for Ecology (Ukraine),
12. Foundation "Unicorn",
13. Round Table of Belarusian Environmental NGOs.

Coalition building will be continuing during all the project implementation process.

The Project Objectives

At the 3rd Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Sofia (23-25 October 1995) in the Conference Declaration Ministers of Environment specifically stressed the necessity of evaluation, by the end of 1997, of the progress achieved in CEECs/NIS in developing National Environmental Action Programmes (NEAPs).

Responding to this the SOFIA+3 Project foreseen a report which will consist of the NGO evaluation of NEAPs in NIS and guidelines of the NGO Common Agenda for the Future to promote the EAP implementation in NIS.

The overall Goal of the Project:

NGO evaluation of NEAPs in NIS countries and promoting development of partnership between NGOs and Governments for the future benefits of the Environment for Europe process.

Project Objectives:

- **facilitation NGO evaluation of development/implementation of the National Environmental Action Plans (NEAP) in NIS countries represented in the Project by correspondent NGOs;**
- collecting NGO input and ideas on the 4th Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe;
- establishing dialogue with NIS Governments, European NGO Coalition Secretariat, EAP Task Force, UN Economic Commission for Europe, 4th Conference Managers, PPC Secretariat, European Environmental Agency and other organizations involved into Environment for Europe process to enable further information exchange and cooperation within NEAPs evaluation process;
- defining the topics most important to NIS NGO community related to NEAPs;
- collecting and disseminating information related to the NEAPs and the 4th Ministerial Conference;
- formulating of the NIS NGO Common Agenda for the Future to promote the EAP implementation in NIS countries;
- development, publishing the Project Report to the NGO Special Session at the 4th Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe.

Output of the Project

The output of the SOFIA+3 Project will be a **report** (up to 32 pages, in Russian and English) with **Preface** (1-2pp)>an **Evaluation Chapter** with individual country NGO evaluation (18-22 pp) and the **EAP NIS NGO Common Agenda for the Future** (5-8 pp). The Evaluation Chapter will present the NGO evaluation of the progress to date in the development and implementation of NEAPs in **Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Ukraine**. *The NGO NEAP evaluations from other NIS countries will be also published if the necessary information will be presented by interested NGOs from this countries.*

It is supposed that the individual country NGO evaluation for **Belarus** and **Ukraine** will include also the NGO input and ideas concerning development of NEAPs for this countries. In **Preface** of the report will be reflected also support provided by EAP Task Force, OECD, UNECE, World Bank (PPC Secretariat), Tacis, European Environmental Agency and other organizations working for Environment for Europe process to make possible more comprehensive -with participation of UN Major Groups - evaluation of NEAPs in NIS countries.

Framework of the Project

The **analytical framework** for preparation of the NGO NEAP evaluation will be a document "**Criteria for Evaluating NEAPs**" (approved by the EAP Task Force in April 1996), which was kindly submitted to the OGI by the **EAP Task Force** by Ms. Olga Savran. The document will be prepared for dissemination in Russian to make it possible for the SOFIA+3 NGO Coalition to evaluate NEAPs using the framework and to prepare their input and ideas to the 4th Ministerial Conference. Using of this document will make it possible to cross-check the SOFIA+3 and the EAP Task Force progress in evaluation of NEAPs along the Road to Aarhus.

It is supposed that the following activity and measures will take place within the Project implementation process:

Step	Activity	Readiness
1.	Presentation of the SOFIA+3 Project for NGOs and other groups of society	November 1997
2.	Establishing contacts with NIS and CEE NGOs and European NGO Coalition Secretariat (Slovenia)	November 1997
3.	Development of detailed Implementation Plan of the Project including Terms of Reference	November 1997
4.	Preparation and dissemination of information materials (on EAP objectives, NEAPs and 4th Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe") and questionnaires for NIS NGOs	November 1997 - April 1998
5.	Preparation and dissemination of the official letter to NIS government institutions, which are involved in EAP implementation process, with request to provide the SOFIA+3 NGO Coalition with information related to development and implementation of NEAPs.	October 1997
6.	Establishing contacts with the EAP Task Force, UN Economic Commission for Europe, 4th Conference Managers, PPC Secretariat, European Environmental Agency, the Tacis environmental awareness raising programme and the other organizations involved into Environment for Europe process to enable further information exchange and cooperation within the NEAPs evaluation process.	December 1997

7.	Project Coalition Strategy Meeting	28 December 1997
8.	<p>Looking for additional funds for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involving other UN Major Groups: local authorities, private sector and scientific community into the NEAPs evaluation process in NIS; • national seminars devoted to evaluation of NEAPs by Major Groups of Belarus', Georgia Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Ukraine; • developing or adapting already existing training course for the local government leaders on development and preparation of Local Environmental Action Programmes; • participation of representatives from the SOFIA+3 NGO Coalition in the 4th Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Aarhus, 23-25 June 1998); • creation of data base on environmental problems which are most important in different regions of NIS. 	during the Project and Coalition activity
9.	Placement of the information about the SOFIA+3 progress on OGI's Internet Web Page http://www.ogii.org	January 1998
10.	Establishing working groups and making analysis of information materials submitted by NIS Governments, NGOs and by organizations mentioned in lines 1 and 5. If correspondent additional funds will be available the informational materials submitted by other Major Groups and National seminars will be processed.	February 1998
11.	Preparation of Guidelines (draft) of the NIS NGO Common Agenda for the Future to promote EAP implementation	March 1998
12.	Developing structure and preparing the draft of the SOFIA+3 Report to the 4th Ministerial Conference	April 1998

13.	<p>Holding the interregional NGO meeting "SOFIA+3" to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● review the NEAP development/implementation in NIS; ● adopt the NIS NGO Common Agenda for the Future; ● evaluate support provided by EAP Task Force, OECD, UNECE, World Bank (PPC Secretariat), European Environmental Agency and other organizations working for Environment for Europe process to make possible more comprehensive NGO evaluation of NEAPs in NIS countries; ● Approve the SOFIA+3 Report to the 4th Ministerial Conference. 	16-17 May 1998 (to enable participation of other Major Groups additional funding is needed)
14.	Publication in Russian and English of the SOFIA+3 Report	June 1998
15.	Presentation of the Project results to the 4th Ministerial Conference	June 1998

Inputs and ideas to the SOFIA+3 are appreciated !!!