

Minutes of the CERI Board Meeting
3rd of February 2006
Bratislava-Devín, Daphne Ekocentrum

Objectives:

To agree on budget, workplan and organizational structure for 2006 according to the EU proposal and BBI-Matra
To agree on draft newsletter

Participants: 12 people. Chair: JS, Minutes: HM. Please note JS = Jan Seffer, MB = Michael Baltzer; TR = Tomas Ruzicka; IA = Ioan Abrudan; AK = Andras Krolopp; RF = Rita Francia; NR = Nenad Robajac; ZW = Zbigniew Witkowski; TM = Tamara Malkova; HM = Hildegard Meyer; DCP = WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme; GEF = Global Environmental Facility; WG = working group; ROP = rules of procedure; TOR = terms of reference; MSP = middle-sized project.

Yaroslav Dovhanych, the NFP for Ukraine, was unable to attend. His substitute Victoria Stolpnik fell ill and was also unable to come. Guest visitors: Anna Guttova (Daphne); Adriana Dinu (UNDP Bratislava). For contact information on the participants, see Appendix B.

Main output:

Revised working programme and budget for 2006
Draft newsletter
Interviewees for the position of the Executive Secretary

1. Presentation of the BBI-Matra Programme by Anna Guttova

JS opened the meeting and introduced Anna Guttova, who will help implementing the BBI-Matra programme within Daphne. She made a presentation on the project background & structure and emphasized the importance of Work Package IV for CERI. Anna Guttova grouped all tasks of CERI into three categories, namely analytical, strategical and structural tasks. JS announced that the budget for BBI-Matra for the next three years was not clear. The origin of the amount of € 58,000 included in the budget prepared at the General Assembly in November 2005 was not clear. AK said that CERI had to clarify the budget to be able to draft the CERI budget and workplan for 2006. In this context, the question arose whether it would be possible to go for the EU Core Fund for 2007 and which audits should be taken. AK said that it would be possible to take the same audits as in 2005. This means that the audits of Daphne, Nadace Partnestvi and WWF-DCP would be the basis of the financial report for the next EU proposal, probably in autumn 2006.

2. Rules of Procedure (logo use, small grants, funds for NFP)

IA introduced the audience to his draft of the ROP for small grants. The small grants (€ 1,000) would support the implementation of already existing projects, which were in line with the Carpathian Convention. He asked whether the money would be transferred via contract or invoice. TM said that the Ukrainian organizations would lose up to 75% of the money and that it would be a long process to get the VAT back. JS said that the

Carpathian Convention would not be crucial, but activities had to be finished in the same year according to the EU Core grant (final reports). He suggested not to give the small grants to all members each year, but a higher amount to really good projects. IA responded that the small grants would be guaranteed only for this year. TR pointed out that giving the money to all members a work overload would come up to the secretary by the end of the year controlling all final technical and financial reports. IA asked whether the amount of € 1,000 for all members included the membership fee for next year. ZW suggested that it would be better to support the top line of applicants, and find criteria for selection of the projects. IA mentioned that this would emphasize the idea of competition and asked which criteria to take for the selection process. He stated that the amount of money was too small for the effort of writing a justification. TR said that CERI could then use the projects as extensively as possible for public relations. IA asked which documents would be needed and whether a final financial report would be enough including invoices for consumable material, meeting costs, business trips, tickets etc. AK and TM suggested that the tax burdens would be too high. JS suggested providing more money for fewer projects. IA said that all members should have access to the money pool. The board members agreed that the small grants were associated with high administrative effort (reading and ranking the proposals etc.) not only for the secretary but also for the board, which would decide on the proposals. AK said that with an easier way of handling the money, one third of the EU money would be spent without control. He suggested that the members would have to report on their project on the website and by doing so the money would be given to them. Finally the board decided not to have small grants at all and to save the money for the working groups or other expenses. The ROP for the use of the logo were to be matched to the ROP specifying who may speak on behalf of CERI. HM will prepare the document by the end of February. The ROP of the NFPs have to include TOR for the NFP. If the NFP fulfills the TOR, namely quarterly reports etc., he/she will receive € 4,500 for the next year. The ROP would be written by the new Executive Secretary.

3. Budget, working programme and organizational structure 2006

The budget and the workplan were discussed on the basis of JS's new version of the budget including the amounts cut. Following the previous debate, the budget lines for the working groups and small grants were combined.

A decision about the format and layout of the newsletter had to be made in order to estimate its costs. The suggestion was to print 500 copies in each country's national language and 1,000 in English. JS suggested producing black & white prints to save money. TM said that she would like to prepare the newsletter before the COP to promote CERI at this event, including articles especially interesting for conference participants. The question arose whether to print the newsletter in one country. Moreover, the budget seemed to be difficult to calculate, because it depended on the format and how often a year a newsletter should be published. TR suggested a budget of € 10,000 for newsletter publication of two newsletters, one before and one after the COP. ZW suggested publishing an online newsletter. IA calculated the money for the newsletter, cutting a certain amount for the audit, because this could not be done by the end of the year; he also suggested to use the money for an annual report. AK suggested summarizing all costs for public relations in the budget and distinguishing between EU Core Grant and

BBI-Matra budget. JS said that the NFP budget (€ 4,000 per NFP) was not only dedicated for communications, but also for coverage of the workload, e.g. preparation of meetings etc. ZW said that the money could be used for filling the gap for the database. JS replied that this would be included in BBI-Matra within the working group budget. He also intended to wait for the budget results on BBI-Matra before getting too concrete in this issue. He agreed to withdraw the money for the audit. AK said that the money should be a reserve, because banking costs were sometimes surprisingly high. JS said that this money would be spent for working groups and small grants.

4. Selection process for the CERi Executive Secretary

Ten candidates (Slovakia 4, Hungary 2, Serbia 2, Poland 1, Austria 1) have applied for position of the Executive Secretary. The board members evaluated the candidates by scoring and ranking their applications. According to both criteria, top four candidates (M. Chrenkova, SK; E. Biro, HU; M. Tadic, SR; and M. Kassa, SK) were selected for an interview. JS, TR and MB should create the selection committee.

5. Development of the Carpathian GEF (Adriana Dinu)

Adriana Dinu (UNDP Bratislava) gave an overview about changes, which took place in the GEF process recently. She said that CERi couldn't go for the full-sized project anymore, because the set of criteria had been changed. The new target areas were no longer ecoregions like the Carpathians, but 'biodiversity focal countries', unfortunately with a focus on Central Asia. At the end of June, the final list of target countries will be presented. It was likely that Ukraine, Romania and Serbia would be on that list, but for the other Carpathian Countries this was not clear. Adriana Dinu offered an option to adapt the work on GEF to the new situation. She suggested that each eligible country should come up with regional projects (Ukraine, Romania, Serbia). She said that projects including the focal topic of the program, namely 'poverty alleviation', would be preferred.

Adriana Dinu shortly reviewed the financial support situation in terms of allocation in the different target countries. In Romania, the World Bank finances a lot of projects for the next 4 years. There were no plans for GEF-4, but Romania went for a € 20 Mio proposal for GEF-4. This would provide an allocation of € 2 Mio per country. In Ukraine there are 2 projects for GEF-4 and one for PDF-B. In Serbia & Montenegro the World Bank finances a tourist project, but only in Montenegro. A letter of endorsement of Serbia is still missing.

Adriana Dinu estimated that there would be a regional/global pool of € 15 Mio for all projects within GEF and added that there was no chance for a full-sized project for the Carpathian region due to all these changes. She suggested changing the PDF-A and to go for a medium-sized project. Two topics would have to be taken out of the proposal and some more endorsement letters prepared. MB asked whether it would be possible to invite the Czechs to cooperate in the project based in Romania. Adriana Dinu said that this would be a matter of presentation.

The next steps for the preparation of the medium-sized project were to find operational focal points and to prepare a letter by Romania saying that the Romanians would allocate the money for MSP according to the changing PDF-A. IA needed the most recent version of the proposal to get the letter by Romania. AK said that the work had to be related to

Romania, Ukraine and Serbia & Montenegro. He doubted that any activities could be carried out in the western parts of the Carpathians. Adriana Dinu informed that for writing a medium-sized project € 50,000 would be allocated instead of € 25,000 for preparation of the full-sized project. JS asked if WWF DCP would be co-financing with € 12,000 as it is in PDF A.

6. Working groups within the CERI

IA suggested to wait for the decisions of the BBI-Matra kick-off meeting to set up working groups. He asked about the items listed in the EU proposal. TR suggested not to define the working groups now, but asking the working group leaders to draw up the TOR, what they would like to achieve. In March/April, contracts for the working groups would be handed out to the leaders. AK suggested to hold a second board meeting right after the BBI-Matra kick-off meeting. JS listed working groups he would like to integrate into BBI-Matra, namely 'Database' and 'Biodiversity'. MB added that a working group for both the ecological network and for biodiversity was needed. IA said that a WG for collecting data on flora and fauna was needed. JS said that this work would not be done by a WG. They agreed that one WG for biodiversity would be enough. JS said that Daphne would subcontract the WGs, and that not only CERI members would work on the database. The question arose which WGs should be established for the BBI-Matra project and what output they would have to provide, because the description of the work package IV in the proposal was very unspecific. ZW suggested to give small grant money to the working group leaders to prepare their task lists. JS said that he would prepare the TOR for the 'Biodiversity' WG and would establish this WG with all organizations interested. He would also like to establish a BBI-Matra advisory board and a control mechanism. MB said that for those WGs which had no obligations WG meetings would be organized to work out their focal topics. JS stated that there were 5 WGs with 'Database' WG and 'Biodiversity' WG being merged to form one WG. IA asked whether 'Environmental Policy' and 'Sustainable Development' were together in one WG, and whether there were any agreements on the TOR for that WG. They agreed that the WG leaders would get information about how much money he/she could spend and whether their WG would be linked to the BBI-Matra proposal (specific tasks for 3 years) or to the EU Core grant (unspecific; for 1 year only). MB said that the 'Environmental Policies & Sustainable Development' WG would provide output for BBI-Matra and was also part of the PDF-A. It was not clear, who would be the leader of this WG. NR will draw up the TOR for this WG. All agreed that Miroslav Tadic would have to draw up the TOR for the 'Environmental Education' WG, TM for the 'Communications' WG and JS for the 'Database and Biodiversity' WG by the end of February. Changenet would provide mailing lists for better communication among members.

7. Communications

TM introduced her draft for the CERI newsletter to the board members. She suggested a cover and central page in color, and the texts would be printed in black and white. All together the newsletter should have 20 pages. She would not mind to publish two newsletters a year. TR suggested to reduce the number of pages. JS said that in order to decide on this they would have to know cost estimates. TR said that the NFP had to be involved in the process and that 8 versions were needed, including the national

languages. He suggested to publish the Czech and Slovak issue together in one edition and to print all versions in one country. AK said that guidelines for the contents, e.g. reports by NFPs, related to the Carpathian Convention etc., had to be drawn up. TM said that she would rather like to publish real events or problems than reports by different NGOs. TM summarized the decision about the newsletter. JS would check prices for printing the newsletter (colored, black and white, 8 or 12 pages, recycled/not recycled paper, 500 copies, standard format, and layout). He suggested to establish an editorial board and to find a native speaker to proofread the draft. He would ask Riki Watzka to help CERI in this issue. ZW asked how the public could report back on the newsletter. TM said that this would never work if people don't gain any benefit from doing so. ZW said that stories from people dealing for example with local tourist paths or agro-tourism would be interesting to publish in the newsletter.

TM would like to have a list of possible articles. JS said that one person per country should be involved and suggested the NFPs. TM said that the board should decide which topics would be important. JS said that he would like to have an editorial team. TM mentioned that the political content of the newsletter had to be discussed within the board. All agreed that the 'Communications' WG should cover all these tasks. The WG should be established by the time the next board meeting takes place in April. TM said that the layout earlier should be fixed earlier, because the newsletter has to be edited by the end of April.

8. Miscellaneous

CERI can offer **internships**, if the governments or other institutions cover the expenses.

ZW asked JS, which kind of **database** he used and said that he could offer a regional/local data layer with species. The question was which ROP were to be set up for quotes and for copyright issues. JS said that they would gain more and more data from the Eastern and Southern Carpathians and that they would organize seminars about biodiversity in the Carpathians and the clearinghouse, which is planned to set up. He added that quotes would sometimes block the process. ZW asked whether he could use this database. JS said that there existed Rules of Cooperation.

HM introduced the audience to a **new EU project** (EU Framework Program 6, Thematic priority 5: "Food Quality and Safety", 4th Thematic Call) entitled "Safe organic food of animal origin – local and indigenous knowledge linked to the principles of sustainable and organic livestock farming". Project manager, Regina Plail, found CERI in the internet and asked for cooperation in this project. The project comprises partners from Austria (University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Science, Department of Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Dairy Diendorf) and India (Anthra, NGO in Pune). The board agreed that CERI should take part in the project, and HM asked who could send any project descriptions and suggestions for the proposal to integrate in. ZW, RF, AK and ZW said that they would ask CERI member organizations in their countries dealing with organic and sustainable agriculture to provide some information.

For an action list following the board meeting, please see **Appendix A**.

Appendix A – Action List –Board Meeting, Bratislava, Feb 3, 2006

ACTION	WHO	DEADLINE
Draft ROP for the use of the logo	HM	End of February
Draft ROP for the funds for NFPs	New Executive Secretary	?
Send out information on WG leaders about TOR	HM	February 18
TOR for ‘Biodiversity’ working group	JS	End of February
TOR for ‘Environmental Education’ WG	Miroslav Tadic	End of February
TOR for ‘Communications’ WG	TM	End of February
TOR for ‘Environmental Policy & Sustainable Development’ WG	NR	March
Check prices for printing the newsletter in SK	JS	End of February
Layout for newsletter	TM	March

Appendix B – Contact Details of Participants

Name	Organisation	Tel	Fax	Mail
Adriana Dinu	UNDP Bratislava, SK	+421 2 59 337 332	+421 2 59 337 450	adriana.dinu@undp.org
Andras Krolopp	CEEWEG Hungary	+36 13 98 01 35	+36 13 98 01 35	krolopp@ceeweb.org
Anna Guttova	Daphne Slovakia			
Hildegard Meyer	DCP	+43 1 524 54 70	+43 1 524 54 70 70	hmeyer@wwfdcp.org
Ioan Abrudan	University of Brasov Romania	+40 723 533 512	+40 723 533 512	abrudan@unitbv.ro
Jan Seffer	Daphne Slovakia	+421 2 455 24 019	+421 245 52 40 19	jansef@changenet.sk
Michael Baltzer	DCP	+43 1 524 54 70	+43 1 524 54 70	mbaltzer@wwfdcp.org
Nenad Robajac	EcoLibri Bionet Serbia	+381 63 63 7177		nrbionet@EUnet.yu
Rita Francia	CEEWEB Hungary	+36 13 98 01 35	+36 13 98 01 35	francia@ceeweb.org
Tamara Malkova	Green Dossier Ukraine	+380 44 287 62 77		tamara@bg.net.ua
Tomas Ruzicka	EPCE – Czech	+420 54 22 18 350	+420 54 22 21 744	Tomas.ruzicka@ecm.cz

	Republic			
Zbigniew Witkowski	EPCE Poland			witkowski@skok.awf.krakow.pl