

## KOSOVO



### Progress Towards Environmental Sustainability



Lack of environmental protection together with the conflict in 1999 has worsened environmental conditions in Kosovo. Inadequate urban and industrial planning, lack of industrial and urban waste collection, uncontrolled tree-cutting, and a low level of water recycling are just some of the reasons for the poor state of the environment. Most polluters are not checked or controlled by law enforcement. Kosovo's rivers are among the most polluted in Europe, and the majority of the population is not connected to the public water and sewage system.

According to official data from 2003, Kosovo's forests cover 41% of its land. Compared with countries in the region and Europe in general, Kosovo has one of the largest percentages of forest-covered areas. Despite artificial reforestation undertaken by the Ministry of Environment in the period after the conflict, a lot of illegal cutting continues to go unmonitored.

An uncontrollable increase in the number of vehicles and the low level of waste collection are other main culprits for the increased level of pollution. There is little or no infrastructure for waste collection, and there are not enough designated landfills to meet the demand of all Kosovo inhabitants. Consequently, people resort to non-designated areas to dispose of their garbage. Waste collection is managed by a socially owned company that still does not have the capacity to deal with the magnitude of the task.

In 2003, 44% of the people of Kosovo had access to the public water system; this figure dropped to 7% for rural areas. Similarly, only 28% of the population was connected to the sewage system in 2003, a figure that dropped to 3% for rural people. The biggest problem is in rural areas, where more than 60% of the people were using unprotected and shallow wells in 2003.

### QUICK FACTS

<b>Total UNDP-GEF and Co-Finance:</b>	\$15,070,362
<b>Total UNDP and Co-Finance:</b>	\$5,410,752
<b>Total MPU and Bilateral:</b>	\$9,659,610
<b>Total:</b>	\$30,140,724

Effective environmental surveillance systems as well as increased environmental awareness and access to information are all needed in order to improve environmental sustainability in Kosovo.<sup>1</sup>

### SPOTLIGHT

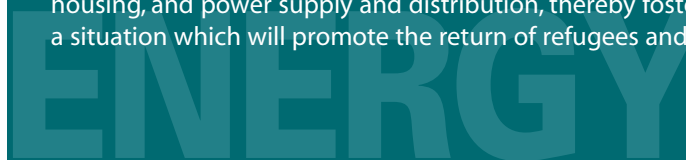
#### Electrification Improves Living Conditions and Promotes Recovery<sup>2</sup>

Over half of all houses in Kosovo suffered damage during the 1998-1999 conflict, according to a post-conflict assessment. Electrical power distribution within Kosovo was also severely affected by both war damage and lack of maintenance of the power lines and transmission equipment. The entire electrical system in Kosovo was almost 40 years old and, in many cases, outdated and inefficient. Consequently, electricity supplies to the towns and villages was so unreliable and of such poor quality that normal economic and social functions were severely disrupted.

Beginning in 1999, UNDP designed the project "Housing and Electrification Programme in Kosovo" (HEIK Project) aimed at restoring basic infrastructure and reviving the damaged communities through rebuilding homes for the most vulnerable families, rehabilitating three electrical distribution networks, and providing training to the Kosovo Energy Corporation in technical and managerial areas. A key element of the project was capacity building of targeted local communities and institutions.

The HEIK project has been very successful in meeting the project goals. 763 houses have been constructed or fully restored throughout 79 villages in Kosovo. Under the electrification component, an immediate impact is most readily experienced by the 4,000 households that have received new service connections. Each of these households now receives the statutory supply voltage of 220V and sufficient capacity to enable the normal operation of lighting, domestic appliances and heating.

The HEIK project has contributed to the recovery and future development of Kosovo by improving basic living conditions in housing, and power supply and distribution, thereby fostering an environment conducive to economic recovery, and creating a situation which will promote the return of refugees and displaced persons to their original communities.



To date UNDP Kosovo has not developed any programmes explicitly designed to address needs on environmental issues or the energy sector. However, by extension through projects such as the Housing and Electrification Kosovo project and the Mother Theresa Square project as well as initiatives like the Kosovo Youth Volunteers some small environment and energy interventions have been initiated.



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## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS IN KOSOVO AND UNDP'S RESPONSE

### Environmental Concerns in Kosovo and UNDP's Response

Environment in Kosovo did not only suffer from a devastating war, but also from more than fifteen years of administrative negligence. However, with the creation of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, things are getting better. The most important challenge is to create the proper legal systems and standards to regulate environmental management, in addition to a vast public awareness and education campaign.

The recently completed Environmental Protection Law (EPL), with assistance from United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), is one step among many others. The law is a framework based on European standards but still lack many details and directives. However, the law is an important tool to be able to create standards for industry and agriculture over the medium- and long-term. The law also establishes a Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency and a Kosovo Environment Fund.

For Kosovo's economy of today to become more self-sustaining, large-scale projects will certainly be needed to develop infrastructure and industry. But they have to be environmentally sustainable as well-and it is just such projects, worries the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), that often carry with them significant environmental side-effects. The key to their sustainability, DEP maintains, is a balance between the development they bring and the short and long-term impact they have on the environment. Properly planned, development projects need not and should not carry with them substantial, detrimental luggage.<sup>3</sup>

UNDP has taken environmental issues in Kosovo from a sustainable development, governance and capacity development angle. For this purpose UNDP has launched its Localizing sustainable development (LoSD) project which aims to provide pilot municipalities with a long-term sustainable development plan. LoSD methodology to the local sustainable development would combine experience in Local Agenda 21 enhancing participatory and strategic approach but also emphasizing practical implementation of activities, decentralization and good governance on the local level, and in socio-economic aspect of the local development.

The UNDP Support to Agriculture Organizations (SAO) project succeeded in creating five cooperatives and gathering in the town of Shtime/Shtimlje where farmers from the Municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica and Shtime/Stimlje presented their products to the media and other stakeholders of the farming sector in Kosovo. Farmers and the heads of cooperatives realized that the creation of the cooperatives will offer them better chances to grow and take a market share.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>MDGR 2004 <http://www.ks.undp.org/MDG/MDG-English-Version.pdf>; <sup>2</sup>UNDP Kosovo website: <http://www.ks.undp.org/Projects/HEIK/heik.asp>. Funded by Government of Japan and UN Human Security Trust Fund (UNHSTF); <sup>3</sup><http://www.unmikonline.org/pub/features/fr034.html>; <sup>4</sup><http://www.kosovo.undp.org/news/news.asp#28June2005>