Foto: Øyvind Angard

MILJØ-
DIREKTORATET

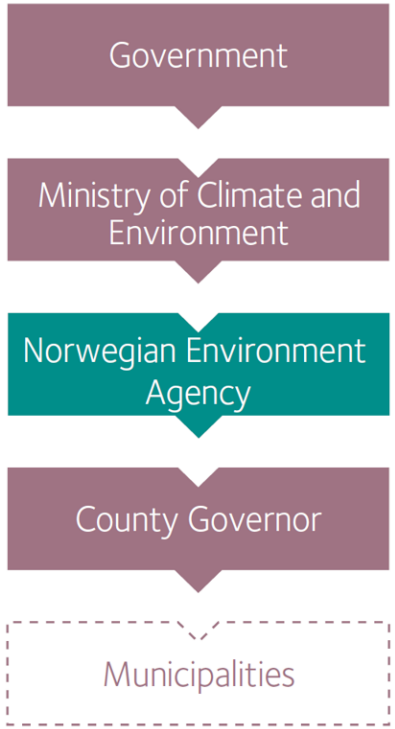
Sofia, May 8, 2019:

Info Day and Match-making Seminar of the Bulgarian Environment Programme

Svein Båtvik, Senior Adviser
Norwegian Environment Agency

This is the Norwegian Environment Agency:

- Agency under the Ministry of Climate and Environment
- Established 2013
- About 700 employees – mainly in Trondheim and Oslo
- **NEA is the Donor Programme Partner to eight environmental programmes in the 2014-21 EEA and Norwegian grants period**



What are the main roles of a DPP?

- **1. To promote a professional cooperation between partners in the donor and the beneficiary states**
- **2. Aims to be of mutual benefit to the cooperating partners**
- - In the development phase of a programme: To act as a partner and an adviser to the PO on objectives, strategies, outcomes, target grups, indicators, risks and communication issues
- - In the implementation phase: To act as an adviser for finding relevant donor partners, facilitate networking, review the progress of the programme, advise on the use and management of bilateral funds
- - Take part in meetings of the Selection Committee in an advisory capacity, particularly to assess potential donor project partners
- - Facilitate study tours for the PO or other collaborating entities, and to organise relevant seminars
- - To provide a platform for increased cooperation between the donor and the beneficiary states, and to increase awareness and understanding to relevant policy makers

Challenges encountered during the 2009-14 EEA grant period in Bulgaria, I

- Slow start and initial planning of the MoU and the BG 02 (2/10-13) and BG 03 (6/1-14) Programme Agreements (PA)
- Not always comparable or consistent bureaucracies between FMO/FMC and the beneficiary country
- The final signing of the Programme Agreement was made just before the EEA grants' period was originally designed to end (2009-14)
- Many of the open call project applications were designed to last for more than the 2,5 years available at the time of signing of the PA
- Late decision by the FMO to allow for an extension of the eligible period from April 30th, 2016 to April 30th, 2017

Challenges encountered during the 2009-14 EEA grant period in Bulgaria, II

- Some delays in the approval of progress reports, delays in disbursements to some projects/project partners
- Public procurement processes in many cases took a longer time than expected by project promoters. This resulted in a few projects not being able to fulfil their goals
- Some Bulgarian partners considered the level of costs in Norway to be higher than expected (NB: Important to agree upon a mutually detailed project budget!)

Positive experiences encountered during the 2009-14 EEA grant period in Bulgaria, I

- The contacts between the Council of Ministers (NFP) and the Ministry of Environment and Water (PO) have been adequate seen from the DPP's perspective
- A rather complicated, but still well-functioning bureaucracy in Bulgaria, seen from the DPP's side, including:
- - Timely checking on the progress in project implementation, including good plans for project visits, control of proper use of resources, verification of expenses, risk analyses, and updated reimbursement overviews per project
- - As a result of good administration with a dedicated staff in the Ministry of Environment and Water, very few formal irregularities in the BG 02 and BG 03 have been encountered

Positive experiences encountered during the 2009-14 EEA grant period in Bulgaria, II

- Good planning for relevant meetings, seminars and conferences, including interesting visits to selected projects
- Good plans for public involvement and publicity; - training courses, publications, exhibitions, films, brochures, contacts with media, contacts with schools
- Good experiences with most of the pre-defined projects
- Many good bilateral and multilateral activities have been undertaken, including seminars and study visits, both to Iceland and to Norway, as well as to various EU countries

Positive experiences encountered during the 2009-14 EEA grant period in Bulgaria, BG 02, a few selected examples:

- Increased capacity of the 'Laboratory of food chemistry and environment' at the Medical University in Varna
- IMAMO and MARLEN projects: E.g. on marine litter like plastics; established contacts between the Institute of Oceanology and NIVA/UniResearch in Bergen
- ANCHOR project: The Norwegian partner NIVA on river management for sustainable hydropower production
- Direct contributions to the River Basin Management Plans (2016-21)
- Development of an early warning flood risk information system
- A new Marine Strategy of Bulgaria, including a programme of measures, approved December 29th, 2016

Positive experiences encountered during the 2009-14 EEA grant period in Bulgaria, BG 03, a few selected examples:

- IBBIS: A Bulgarian Biodiversity Information System developed (with NINA)
- RIGHTS: Farmer's rights to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture: Implementation of the Plant Treaty and the Nagoya Protocol in Bulgaria (with NIBIO)
- Ecosystem services mapping and assessment in the Bulgarian territories outside the Natura 2000 network through nine projects (with i.a. the Norwegian Forestry Group and NINA)
- IT infrastructure and tools for supporting management of invasive alien species in Bulgaria developed
- Regional and national plans and strategies e.g. on forest areas, plant genetic resources and sustainable use of the Black Sea coastal ecosystems drafted/submitted
- ESENIAS-TOOLS: An East and South European network for invasive alien species developed
- Exposition of invasive alien species in the National Museum of Natural History (January 2017)

Glimpses from the bilateral activities:

Planning meeting in Oslo, June 2012

SC meeting, Sofia, April 2015

More memories: Bergen, November 2015

CC meeting, Bergen, Norway, November 2015

CC meeting, Burgas, May 2016: Nesebar

CC Meeting, Burgas, May 2016: Imperial Turkish Bath, Aqua Calidae (Thermopolis)

CC meeting, Burgas, May 2016: Poda Protected Site

CC meeting, Burgas, May 2016: Poda Conservation Centre

CC meeting, Burgas, May 2016: St. Anastasia Island

CC meeting, Burgas,
May 2016: St. Anastasia
Island

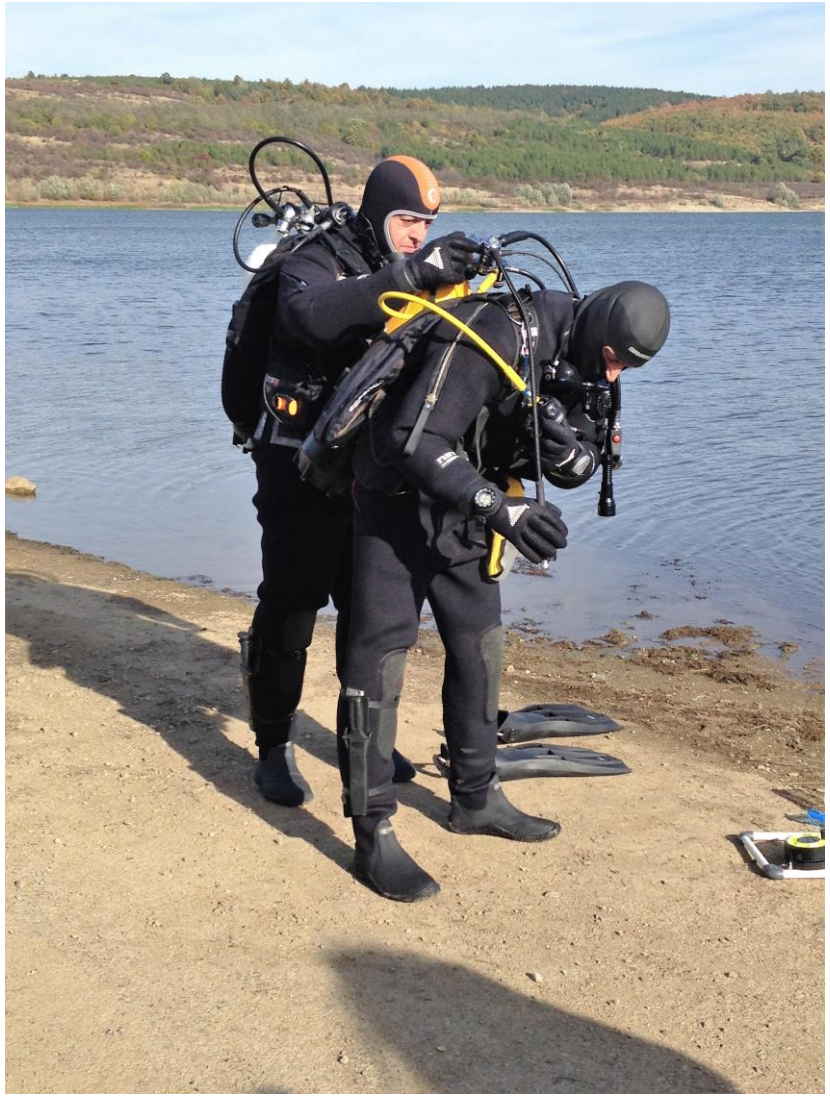
Iceland Liechtenstein Norway grants

EEA Conference in
Sofia, October 2016

EEA Conference in Sofia,
October 2016

Iceland Liechtenstein Norway grants

EEA Conference in Sofia, October 2016: The excursion on alien invasive species



EEA Conference in Sofia, October 2016: The excursion on alien invasive species

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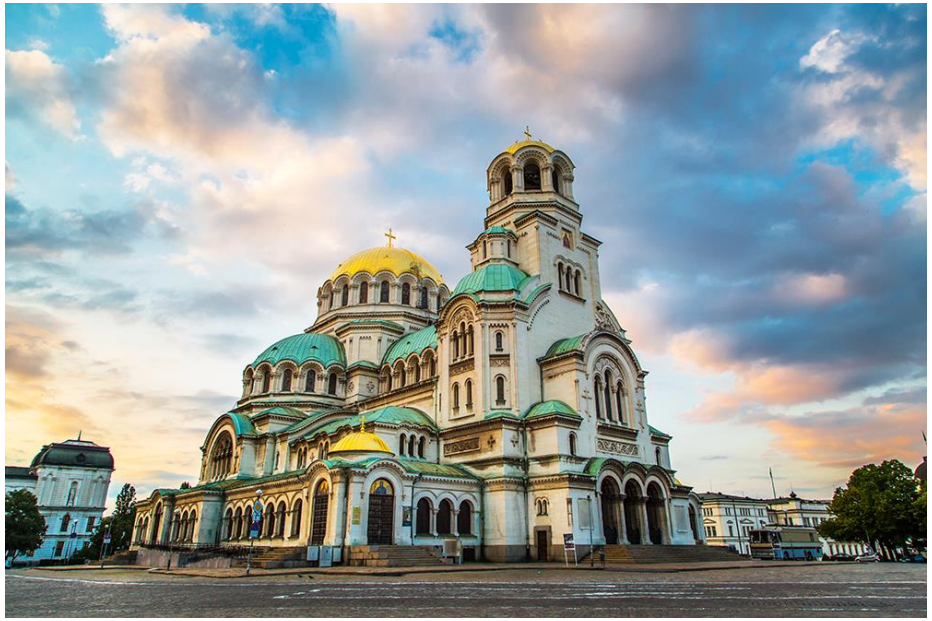

Two final challenges for the project proponents:

- All project proponents should be challenged to consider and/or seek relevant partners in Norway

- All project proponents should be challenged to think about publicity and relevant public information

Благодаря ви за вниманието!