



INTERNATIONAL WATERS RESULTS NOTES

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28-08-2011

Wetlands restoration and pollution reduction project

GEF Agency Project ID: P068858 Project Status: Completed



1. The project piloted restoration of 4035 ha of former marshes (double the original target) in two protected areas and brought under improvement management and protection 27 700 ha with globally significant biodiversity habitats.
2. Fifty-five small grant projects have been successfully implemented on the two project sites under the “Small Grant Program for Biodiversity Conservation”. The projects were targeted at raising public awareness of biodiversity conservation mainly among young people. The execution of the program involved 23 NGOs, about 65 leading experts, nearly 5500 students and about 250 children from kindergartens.
3. The project introduced a new idea and brought to a turnaround in perceptions – wetlands are now seen not only as a beautiful wildlife habitat, but also as contributing to sustainable development and economic growth. They bring environmental and economic benefits, and act as a buffer against floods.

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the project is to demonstrate and provide for replication of reduction of transboundary nutrient loads and other agricultural pollution flowing into the Danube river and the Black Sea basins while at the same time conserving key target threatened species in the project area through (i) wetlands restoration and protected areas management programs, and (ii) support for stakeholders to adopt environmentally friendly economic activities in the two project areas.

RESULTS: PROCESS

Gradual improvement in ecosystem health of restored wetlands.

Unique landscapes and habitats for important bird species protected. Nutrients in outflow waters reduced. Critical fish reproduction habitats restored.

Bird numbers of 22 species were found to increase and fish species increased from 2 to 10 in the first test flooding of Belene Island within 2 months. Kalimok marshes also successfully flooded in December 2008. Further gradual improvements expected.

Improved agricultural practices in Belene and Kalimok and increased local awareness and support for biodiversity conservation.

Sustainable natural resources Management adopted by local communities and local authorities in Belene and Kalimok.

RESULTS: STRESS REDUCTION

Wetlands restoration investments made in Belene Island, Kalimok marshes and other priority sites restored to promote nutrient trapping.

A total of 4,035 ha of wetlands restored: 2280 ha restored at Persina Nature Park and 1755 ha restored at Kalimok Brushlen Protected Site.

Development of protected areas management plans in both sites in a participatory manner.

Management plans prepared and approved by MOEW.

RESULTS: WATER RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Establishment of protected areas administrations with agreed operational rules and procedures.

Protected areas management capacity in Persina Nature Park and Kalimok Brushlen Protected Site raised from 17% to 90%.

Both areas have permanent professional staff and are fully equipped with boats, vehicles, monitoring equipment, etc.

Strengthened planning and institutional capacity for protected areas management in both sites.

Adoption of protected areas management plans and establishment of effective administrations in both sites.

Both sites designated as NATURA 2000 sites and have facilities to monitor environmental impact of restorations. Protected Area's capacity strengthened, administrations equipped, environmental monitoring programs developed and under implementation, staff trained.

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