



## **Promoting Payments for Ecosystem Services and Related Sustainable Financing Schemes in the Danube Basin**

*This project promotes and supports land managers who help us sustain the benefits that we all get from nature.  
The project is implemented by the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme  
with the financial support of the GEF through UNEP, and of the European Commission*

### **What are Payments for Ecosystem Services?**

Ecosystem services are the multiple benefits that people receive from nature, such as water purification and flood control by wetlands. The Payments for Ecosystem Services schemes (PES) reward those whose lands provide these services, with subsidies or market payments from those who benefit. This could mean, for example, that a bottling company uses water purified by an upstream forest. In order to maintain this service – a well managed forest – the company pays the forest managers a certain amount of money to ensure they keep this forest.

Arranging payments for the benefits provided by forests, fertile soils and other natural ecosystems is a way to recognize their value and ensure that these benefits continue well beyond present generations. It encourages landowners to manage resources in a manner that avoids damage or additional costs for other users of these resources. For example the bottling company would need to purify water with costly technologies if the natural system was not in place. In addition to the biodiversity benefits, also poor landowners who manage their land without pesticides and synthetic fertilisers can benefit if they are rewarded by companies depending on soil and water quality.

WWF is leading the development and implementation of this innovative approach to conservation.

### **What will this project do?**

- Promote the concept of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in the Danube basin
- Encourage related Sustainable Financing schemes (SF)
- Demonstrate how national and local-level PES/SF schemes work
- Contribute to rural development and conservation in the Lower Danube basin in Romania and Bulgaria
- Promote the integration of PES/SF schemes into the River Basin Management Plans for the Danube, its sub-basins and other major river basins
- Develop and share experience and learning with other countries in the Danube River basin, especially Serbia and Ukraine, with other major river basins and the international community.

### **What are the overall goals of this project?**

- Make Payments for Ecosystem Services and Sustainable Financing mainstream in the Danube basin
- Show that PES and SF schemes work in large-scale international watersheds
- Secure global environmental benefits



### **What is the project duration?**

48 months (January 2010 – December 2013)

### **What are the project components and expected results?**

*Design, development and promotion of PES and other Sustainable Financing schemes in Bulgaria and Romania*

- National PES schemes in Romania and Bulgaria effectively reward provision of Danube-related ecosystem services and are integrated into the Danube River basin and sub-basin management plans
- Capacity building and training in PES and Sustainable Financing schemes for key stakeholders in Romania and Bulgaria
- Demonstration of local-level implementation of public payments for Danube-related ecosystem services
- Demonstration of private sector involvement and support for PES schemes

*Capacity building for river basin managers and other key stakeholders in the wider Danube River basin and major river basins in the world*

- Information and experience exchange for key stakeholders in the Danube and its sub-river basins (focusing on Serbia and Ukraine)
- Exchange of information and experience with stakeholders in selected major river basins (in Asia, Africa and Latin America)
- Document, distribute and discuss best practices and lessons learned with the conservation and international community