

Danish Environmental Assistance

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In 1993 Denmark followed up on the UN objective at Rio de Janeiro by establishing a financial facility for Danish environmental assistance, now known as the Environment, Peace and Stability Facility (EPSF), which is new and additional to the 1% of the GNP provided under the development assistance budget. Denmark decided that the total budget should gradually increase until it reaches the target of 0.5% of the GNP by 2005. The figure for 1999 is DKK 3.2bn (approx. USD 400 million). These funds are allocated equally between environmental assistance on the one hand and peace and stability initiatives on the other hand. Denmark provides environmental assistance to a broad range of countries and projects throughout the world.

The Ministry of Environment and Energy comprises three units which run environmental assistance programmes: Danish Co-operation for Environment in the Arctic (DANCEA), Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development (DANCED) and Danish Co-operation for Environment in Eastern Europe (DANCEE). Danida (Danish International Development Agency) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also administers EPSF funds in addition to the support provided for sustainable development including specific environmental support projects and programmes provided as development assistance.

DANCEA — Environmental Assistance to the Arctic

In the period 1994-1999 DANCEA launched many environmental projects in the Arctic, which faces serious environmental problems. For example, research projects have clearly documented that the populations of marine animals in the waters around Greenland are declining. A deeper understanding has been obtained of factors that influence the habitat of marine species and of what constitutes sustainable exploitation of marine animal populations.

One very significant achievement has been mapping the spread of pollutants and persistent toxic substances, which find their way to the Arctic by air and sea. It has been ascertained that these substances, via the food chain, accumulate in great concentrations in the body tissues of the Arctic populations. The male population in Eastern Greenland, for instance, carries in the blood-stream very high concentrations of PCB, a toxin presumed to be highly carcinogenic.

DANCEA also aims to involve the indigenous Arctic population actively in efforts to conserve and improve the environment. Not least in order to benefit from the local, comprehensive knowledge of natural conditions in the Arctic.

Web address: www.mst.dk/dancea-uk/

DANCED — Environmental Assistance to Developing Countries

In the period 1994-1999 DANCED conducted several projects in southern Africa (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland) and Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Thailand). One result has been to help move the environment higher up the national agenda in these countries. Malaysia and Thailand, for instance, have increased investments in environmental initiatives. In Thailand the programmes have helped strengthen environmental bodies at government and local levels.

DANCED's involvement in South Africa is a good example of how Danish environmental assistance is not merely a matter of exporting technology in an isolated context — technology is part of the holistic approach represented by valuable Danish experience. In the first instance, assistance went to the reform process. Later DANCED supported the creation of a raft of environment policies, including a forestry policy, a policy on utilisation of water resources and a policy for sustainable management of biodiversity and the subsequent benefits. In addition to supporting overall strategies, assistance to South Africa has also included detailed action plans, the accumulation of know-how and skills in the central government environment administration and greater environmental awareness among the population at large.

Web address: www.mst.dk/danced-uk/

DANCEE — Environmental Assistance to Eastern Europe

In the period 1991-1999 DANCEE implemented approximately 800 projects in Eastern Europe. The programme has helped increase environmental consciousness in this part of the world and DANCEE can already show a number of concrete results. One success is that it has encouraged Eastern European countries to fund a large part of the project costs themselves which in turn has generated a basis for loans totalling DKK 6bn from international banks. Environmentally, too, there are tangible results. One example is that wastewater, previously pumped untreated into the Baltic, from a population of two million people, is now being treated. Also, Eastern European sulphur dioxide emissions have been substantially reduced.

Efforts in Eastern Europe have also involved projects of a more strategic nature. DANCEE has assisted a number of countries to set up plans for phasing out lead in petrol and supported efforts to bring national environmental laws in line with EU directives. DANCEE has also helped countries comply with the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer. This effort has paved the way for other assistance and thereby directly helped to eliminate 20% of the world's total consumption of ozone-depleting substances.

Web address: www.mst.dk/dancee-uk/

Danida – Danish International Development Agency

Under the 1% of the GNP budget for development assistance, Danida extends environmental assistance in order to promote sustainable development in several ways.

Environment is being mainstreamed as a crosscutting concern issue in all Danish development assistance. Multilateral organisations are also encouraged to mainstream environmental concerns.

Environment is supported directly as the focus area for sector programme assistance and projects. This is done bilaterally in partnership with developing countries.

Support to global environmental programmes and multilateral organisations. This includes support to the development and implementation of international agreements such as the Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Montreal Protocol, the negotiations for a legally binding instrument on POPs etc. Also multilateral organisations and international NGOs working with environment enjoy Danida support, e.g. UNEP, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, GEF, IUCN, IIED etc.

In addition to this, environmental assistance under the EPSF is provided for some of the world's poorest countries in southern Africa and Southeast Asia. In partnership with the countries in question, support is concentrated on a limited number of areas such as natural resources management, sustainable energy, water resources, urban environment and industrialisation, coastal zone management, forests and biodiversity.

Web address: www.um.dk/danida/