



PROJECT SUMMARY
South Ossetia Social Infrastructure Rehabilitation Programme

Total budget: US\$ 1,675,000

UNDP Sector: Protection of and Assistance to Refugees, Displaced and Conflict-Affected Persons

Partner Organizations: EU, OSCE, UNHCR

Background: Almost immediately after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union independent Georgia was plunged into a political turmoil and a civil war. The South Ossetian authorities declared sovereignty in August 1990 and this was the first region of Georgia where a conflict occurred. It resulted in the death of more than 1000 people. According to UNHCR estimates as a direct consequence of the armed conflict in South Ossetia close to 60,000 individuals were displaced, of which approximately 50,000 ethnic Ossetians and 10,000 ethnic Georgians fled from their homes and ancestral lands during the conflict. Approximately 40,000 people crossed over into North Ossetia (NO) and became refugees, while the others remained within the Georgian territory and became IDPs. As per the census in 1989 the total population of the region was 98 000 people where Ossetians constituted 66,61% and Georgians 29,44%. The remaining 4% were made up of Russians, Armenians and Jews.

Objective: The Project's long-term development objective is to facilitate the peaceful settlement of the conflict, which inter alia includes the return of IDP/Refugees, by providing adequate living conditions for resident and returning populations, improving their shelter conditions and basic infrastructure. This goal will be achieved by accomplishing two immediate objectives: 1) Improving the population's access to water, constant energy and gas supply as well as the access to basic social services by implementing projects on energy, gas, water and sanitation. 2) Improving the living conditions in selected returnee villages through rehabilitation of basic infrastructure adjacent to UNHCR shelter reconstruction sites.

By the end of the project it will have facilitated the renovation of damaged and neglected social and economic infrastructure and services; creation of income and employment opportunities for the rural population through participating in rehabilitation activities; provision of cash injections in the rural economy through contracts with local implementing partners, and promoting the emergence and development of private construction and other companies in the rural areas.

Strategy: The project unites four major international organizations (EU, OSCE, UNHCR and UNDP) in their objective to facilitate the return of IDP/refugees to South Ossetia thus contributing to the resolution of the long-standing Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The rationale for cooperation is to achieve maximum efficiency by combining financial and human resources with specific technical experience and institutional advantages. The four agencies will be cooperating with the Government of Georgia as well as the South Ossetian authorities within the framework of a Steering Committee to reach the project objectives. The project intends to apply all major elements of implementation modalities introduced in South Ossetia by UNDP in 1996. The key feature of this modality is the creation of Steering Committee as a decision-making body and Project Implementation Unit(s) to implement the decisions of the SC. The Steering Committee established within the present project will operate within the format of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Georgian and Ossetian Authorities, EC, OSCE, UNHCR and UNDP.

Target Areas and Beneficiaries: Target areas for interventions under this proposal are the territories affected by the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. Resident communities as well as the families of returnees, whose houses will be rehabilitated, will benefit directly from the reconstructed socio-economic infrastructure.