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## Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project

Contract No. 2011/279-666



A project implemented by a consortium led by Hulla & Co. Human Dynamics KG

### EPIRB 2<sup>nd</sup> National Coordination Committee Meeting for Georgia 12 December, 2013

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia  
6, Gulua Street, Tbilisi 0114, Georgia

#### Agenda

Agenda of the 2nd NCC meeting is attached to the minutes as Annex-1

#### Participants

##### NCC Members and Representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MENRP) of Georgia

- **Ms Nino Tkhilava**, Head of Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations
- **Ms Mariam Makarova**, Head of Water Resources Management Service, Department of Integrated Environmental Management
- **Mr Alexander Mindorashvili**, Deputy Head of Water Resources Management Service, Department of Integrated Environmental Management
- **Ms Neli Korkotadze**, Chief State Inspector, Department of Environmental Inspection
- **Ms Salome Khachiauri**, Chief Specialist, Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations
- **Ms Nino Tskhadadze**, Chief Specialist, the Black Sea Commission Member, Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations
- **Ms Maia Javakhishvili**, Chief Specialist, ENPI-SEIS NFP, Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations
- **Ms Marine Arabidze**, Head of Environmental Pollution Monitoring Department, National Environmental Agency - NEA
- **Mr Jemal Dolidze**, Deputy Head, Department of Hydrometeorology, NEA
- **Ms Gulchina Kuchava**, Data Quality Control Manager, Environmental Pollution Monitoring Department, NEA
- **Ms Elina Bakradze**, Head of Laboratory, Environmental Pollution Monitoring Department, NEA

##### Non-Governmental Organizations/International Projects

- **Ms Sophiko Akhobadze**, Director, the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus - REC

##### EU/ENPI Monitoring Team



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- **Ms Inna Bayda**, Mission Leader, ENPI Monitor

### Human Dynamics Consortium

- **Mr Timothy Turner**, Project Team Leader (KE1)
- **Mr Zurab Jincharadze**, Deputy Team Leader (KE2)
- **Ms Ketii Metreveli**, Office Manager

### Summary of Discussions

The 2<sup>nd</sup> NCC meeting was opened by **Ms Nino Tkhilava**, Head of Environmental Policy and International Relations Department, who welcomed the participants and spoke about importance of the project for Georgia. Ms Tkhilava specifically highlighted uniqueness of the project for the activities that never been covered with other projects, such as monitoring of groundwater aquifers, as well as establishing WFD elements of hydro-morphological and hydro-biological monitoring. She expressed appreciation towards the EC and the project management team for flexibility of taking into consideration specific needs of beneficiary institutions and for extending of the Joint Field Surveys in the Khrami-Debed and Alazani transboundary basins started by the previous EU-Kura project.

Welcoming remarks on behalf of the EPIRB were made by the Project Team Leader, **Mr Timothy Turner**, who highlighted objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting. After approval of the Agenda, Mr Turner presented project outlines, and main activities carried out since starting of the Implementation Phase (August 2012 - December 2013).

**Mr Zurab Jincharadze**, Project Deputy Team Leader, presented details of the project implementation activities and achieved results in Georgia. He particularly highlighted monitoring activities during the Joint Field Survey (JFS) in the pilot basin, as well as first attempts of developing draft classification system for preliminary assessment of biological and ecological status of identified water bodies.

The following plenary session generated comments and questions from the participants and motivated lively discussions on various issues, including following topics:

- Specific hydrological studies carried out in the pilot basin, as well as applied criteria for selecting boundaries for the 'basin districts'. (**Mr Jemal Dolidze**);
- Means of fulfilling the EU WFD requirements for water quality monitoring and basin management planning that Georgia will commit to after signing the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (**Ms Marina Arabidze**);
- Involvement of local stakeholder and partner organizations (including the Black Sea Monitoring laboratory in Batumi) in the process of field sampling and water quality analysis;
- Estimated costs for recovery groundwater monitoring network in the pilot basin;
- Mechanisms for cooperation with the similar projects, such as EMBLAS - "Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea" also funded by the EU (**Ms Marina Makarova**);
- Ways of identification of point and non-point sources of pollution in the pilot basin;



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- The differences in the proposed RBMP process from the already accomplished basin management plans prepared by the EU-Kura project;
- Specific approach for implementation of the communication strategy and communication plan and raising public awareness in the pilot basin (**Ms Sophiko Akhobadze**);
- Ways of receiving information on hydrological flow from the Turkish part of the Chorokhi River (**Mr Jemal Dolidze**), etc.

The second session was dedicated to the discussion of the EU proposal to establish national Technical Working Groups (WGs) on Water Quality Monitoring and Water Quality Assessment. The session was moderated by **Mr Jincharadze**, who clarified the rationale of this proposal, according to which the WGs will be assigned the tasks of design of the WFD compliant national monitoring programmes and transition of the existing water quality monitoring standards towards the principles and norms practiced in the EU.

On the above issue, the statement was made by **Ms Makarova**. She informed the participants that the relevant staff members of the Ministry of Environment and National Environmental Agency had had several discussion meetings and are in the process of drafting a concept note on the establishing a single Monitoring and Assessment Working Group. She emphasised that the Agency believes that one working group would be sufficient to handle the both tasks, as human resources in both organizations are very scarce, and the personnel and independent experts they would consider for these tasks are the same. She recommended that the Working Group consist of 2 persons from the Water Resources Management Service of the MENRP; 2 - from the Department of Environmental Inspection, MENRP; 8 members from the NEA monitoring units, representing physico-chemical, hydro-biological and hydro-morphological monitoring; 1 independent hydrobiology expert - from an academic sector (Ilia State University). Exact team composition of the Monitoring and Assessment Working Group will be known after further negotiation and formal agreement to be signed by the First Deputy Minister of MENRP, which is scheduled tentatively for the end of January 2014. Ms Makarova expressed interest for EPIRB support to guide this process during the project's lifetime and when possible to include the project Key Experts in the Working Group. She pointed out that the Ministry would require a formal letter from EPIRB confirming availability of the expert.

Plenary discussion, led by Mr Jincharadze, focused on possible WG structure, functions, most urgent and priority issues to be implemented at first stage, timeline of specific activities to be assigned to each member of the group and short-term and longer term goals that shall be achieved out of this exercise. It was recommended that the WG meetings be linked to the EPIRB NCC and EUWI NPD meetings, but for technical and specific discussion topics electronic communication shall be used.

At the last (third) session, **Mr Turner** and **Mr Jincharadze** presented planned activities for the next reporting period and up to the end of the project. They have focused particularly on the upcoming River Basin Management Planning (RBMP) tasks that will start in January 2014 and will continue for about next 12 months. The RBMP activity will build on the results of already conducted activities and will include: deeper and more thorough analysis outlining the pressures and threats driving the impacts on ecological conditions of water bodies and significant water management issues; assessment of water bodies at risk, including:

- Establishment of risk criteria and environmental objectives in short/medium and long term period;



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- Programme of Measures covering basic and supplementary measures;
- Economic Analysis and prioritised measures report; and
- Draft River Basin Management Plan

The draft RBMP will be presented to designate basin authorities, other key stakeholders and the general public on national and local levels for public consultation leading to adoption of the RBMP and final approval.

The last session was followed by questions and answers on the following discussion points: mechanism of involving local experts and stakeholders in the above work; status of the Alazani and Khrami-Debed Joint Field Surveys and possibility for extension for the second year; laboratory capacity building with a specific trainings and additional support activities, etc.

At the end of the meeting, **Mr Turner** informed the participants that the next EPIRB Progress Report will be produced and available for NCC comments by February 2014. In summarizing the meeting results, **Ms Makarova** thanked the audience for productive discussions and on behalf of the Ministry and the project National Coordination Committee appreciated activities undertaken by the EPIRB project in Georgia and plans for the next two years.



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**ANNEX - 1: Meeting Agenda**

**EPIRB 2<sup>nd</sup> National Coordination Committee Meeting for Georgia**

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia  
6, Gulua Street, Tbilisi 0114, Georgia

*Languages: Georgian and English, consecutive interpretation is provided*

**12 December 2013**

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**13:30 - 14:00 Registration of participants / hosted by coffee and refreshments**

14:00 - 14:15 Welcome and opening remarks:

- *Ms Nino Tkhlava, Head of Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations, - MENRP*
- *Mr Timothy Turner, Team Leader, Environmental Protection of International River Basins - EPIRB*

14:15 - 14:20 Meeting objectives and adoption of the agenda:

- *Ms Mariam Makarova, Head of Water Resourced Management Service – MENRP, Head of EPIRB NCC in Georgia*

**SESSION I Project overall progress and status**

14:20 - 14:40 Project outline, objectives and results of activities undertaken in 2012-2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Steering Committee meeting in Tbilisi and main results

- *Mr Timothy Turner, Team Leader, EPIRB*

14:40 - 15:00 Project results to the date – implementation of EPIRB activities in Georgia

- *Mr Zurab Jincharadze, Deputy Team Leader, EPIRB*

15:00 - 15:30 Plenary discussion on the progress achieved, moderated by Ms Mariam Makarova

**SESSION II Proposal to establish national WGs for transition towards WFD compliant monitoring programme in Georgia**

15:30 - 16:15 Plenary discussion on the proposed WG activities, moderated by Mr Zurab Jincharadze



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**16:15 - 16:30 Coffee Break**

### **SESSION III Project plans for the next reporting period (s)**

16:30 - 17:00 Project on-going activities and proposed plans for the next reporting period and towards end of the project

- *Mr Timothy Turner, Team Leader, EPIRB*
- *Zurab Jincharadze, Deputy Team Leader, EPIRB*

17:00 - 17:20 Plenary discussion on the proposed activities, moderated by Ms Mariam Makarova

17:20 – 17:30 Adoption of the proposed EPIRB activities and plans and closure of the meeting

- *Mr Timothy Turner, Team Leader, EPIRB*



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## ANNEX - 2: Meeting Photos

