



This project is funded by the European Union

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

Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project (EPIRBP) Minutes of Azerbaijan Kick-off Inception Mission Meetings

Participants:

Project Team

Mr Andriy Demydenko, KE1 / Team leader
Mr Zurab Jincharadze, KE2 / Deputy Team leader

Human Dynamics

Ms Ivelina Dilovska, Project Director, Implementation Department

Day-I: 15 March 2012

Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan
100 A, B. Aghayev St. Az1073 Baku, Azerbaijan / www.eco.gov.az

16:00 - 17:30

MENR Azerbaijan

Mr Rasim Sattarzadeh, Head of Environmental Policy Division Sector
Mr Mutalim Abdulhasanov, Head of Division, Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection Policy

Summary of Discussion

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR) is a main beneficiary and target institution of the project in Azerbaijan. Therefore the Ministry's expectation for the project and readiness to cooperate with the project implementation team to achieve concrete results is high. Other important issues discussed during the meeting included:

- Composition of the project National Coordination Committee and Regional Steering Committee;
- Official nomination of the Project Focal Point from the project target institution of Azerbaijan;
- Nomination of a pilot basin for Azerbaijan, preferably having trans-boundary location, or clear upstream to downstream effect on a national scale.

For all the mentioned issues MENR sees necessary to communicate this request on a highest possible level through an official letter, addressed either to the Cabinet of Ministers, or the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan. Another very strong position of the Ministry was related to the way of communication with other beneficiary institutions. It was advised that the project should try to avoid direct communication with other beneficiaries and leverage all activities in Azerbaijan through the Ministry of Environment. In addition, the Ministry finds necessary that for all important meetings with institutions other than MENR, one of their representative has to be present. Although the project team has different understanding on this matter, it was carefully recommended that the team will discuss their advice with the Contracting Authority and continue acting according to the project ToR and EC rules and regulations.

EPTISA Engineering, EU Kura-III Project Office for Azerbaijan



This project is funded by the European Union

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

44, J. Jabbarli St. Caspian Plaza 6th Floor, Az1065 Baku, Azerbaijan / www.kuraarasbasin.net

15:30 - 16:30

EPTISA

Mr Rafig Verdiyev, Head of EPTISA Azerbaijan Business Development, Kura-III National Coordinator

Mr Farid Garayev, Business Development Specialist

Summary of Discussion

Results achieved during the Kura Phase II project and plans for the Phase III were discussed at the meeting with the Kura-III project implementation team in Azerbaijan. The main idea of the meeting was to discuss ways for cooperation and how to avoid overlapping initiatives, as the two water projects have some similarities in their objectives and expected outcomes. Mr Rafig Verdiyev, the Kura-III National Coordinator for Azerbaijan, has informed on the current activities and the pilot River Basin Management Plans (RBMP), including some interesting program of measures, developed during the Phase II. Special attention was paid to the planned training session at Alazani pilot basin to be organised for monitoring personnel of Azerbaijan and Georgia that will focus on methodology and techniques for identification of surface water quality reference conditions. The EPIRB project team will consider the possibility of attending such pilot exercises, as the same methodology can be applied to water quality assessment in selected pilot basins of the project.

Day-II: 16 March 2012

**National Environmental Monitoring Department,
Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan
50, Heydar Aliyev Ave. Baku, Azerbaijan / www.eco.gov.az**

10:00 - 11:30

National Environmental Monitoring Department

Mr Arastun Hasanov, Director

Ms Matanat Avazova, Deputy Director

Summary of Discussion

The National Environmental Monitoring Department (NEMD) is part of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. The Department is responsible for collecting, analysing, processing and maintenance of surface water quality data, and thus is a very important beneficiary of the project. NEMD is very keen to trans-boundary cooperation with neighbouring Georgia and ready to actively support the project. The project team has discussed possible options for pilot area selection and specific activities to be carried out for implementation of EU WFD compliant monitoring programs in beneficiary countries, including assessing ecological status of surface water bodies based on hydro-morphological, chemical and biological monitoring systems. For the selection of a pilot basin area in Azerbaijan Ms Avazova suggested that the project National Coordination Committee will discuss and agree on it first thing as soon as the committee will be established, but preferably before the end of April.

State Water Resources Agency, Ministry of Emergency Situations of Azerbaijan



This project is funded by the European Union

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

33, Rasul Reza St. Baku, Azerbaijan / www.fhn.gov.az

12:00 - 13:30

State Water Resources Agency - SWRA

Mr Heydar Ismailov, Deputy Head of the Agency
 Mr Sayad Aleskerov, Head of the Staff
 Mr Arif Akhundov, Head of Unit (which one?)
 Mr Shafiq Babayev, Head of Unit (which one?)
 Mr Elnar Sultanov, Head of Hydrological Unit
 Mr Sahib Hasanzade, Head of Hydrotechnical Devices Exploitation Sector

National Environmental Monitoring Department, MENR

Ms Matanat Avazova, Deputy Director

EU Delegation to Azerbaijan

Mr Parviz Yusifov, Project Manager

Summary of Discussion

The State Agency of Water Resources is a recently established institution operating under the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Azerbaijan. Functions of the Agency include management of large water reservoirs, safety and maintenance of hydro-engineering infrastructure, flood prevention and monitoring, etc. Other functions of the agency yet have to be developed and refined to avoid overlapping with other government structures with responsibilities for the water sector; however it is obvious that their role for developing and ownership (?) of basin management plans and their consequent implementation is expected to increase in the future.

The Agency's position towards the project was very much supportive and open to cooperation. The Agency's initial questions before receiving more detailed information on the project goals and activities can be summarized as follows:

- The Agency would like to receive the project ToR in Russian through a formal communication (preferably through the EUD Azerbaijan) in order to be able to comment on the document and the planned project activities officially*;
- The Agency would like to know in what capacity would it be possible to involve the Agency in the project;
- As the pilot areas might include some large areas at national level the Agency sees it necessary to have the Cabinet of Ministers' decision on the institution responsible for water resources management and river basin planning in Azerbaijan;
- The Agency would like to see assistance of international donor organizations and EPIRB project in particular for modifying national water legislation according to the standards and some key elements of EU Water Framework Directive;
- The Agency recognises importance of changing centralized style of water resources management to more modern basin management and would like to participate in this process, as they have all necessary technical and human capacity (automated hydrological stations, cadastral database, modelling and forecasting capability, etc.).



This project is funded by
the European Union

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

**Informal comments from the Agency on the Russian version of the project ToR were received shortly after the kick-off mission.*

Ms. Matanat Avazova, Deputy Director of National Environmental Monitoring Department, in response of the Agency's concerns, informed that according to the existent water code and environmental legislation management of water resources, water quality and quantity monitoring is responsibility of the sole Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. However, she clearly recognises the important role of the Agency in the project National Coordination Committee (NCC), as well as EU's other on-going projects, including the EUWI National Policy Dialogue (NPD).

In addition to Ms Avazova's statement, the EPIRB project team emphasised the SWRA's potential role in developing and ownership of a pilot River Basin Management Plan based on their mandate, responsibilities and interest to participate in water management processes.

Mr Yusifov informed the participant that EUD will be happy to support the Government of Azerbaijan in the approximation of the national legislation to EU standards, including the Water Framework Directive. Therefore if there will be an official request by the Government setting priorities, the EUD is ready to consider such proposal.

Side Meetings

15:00 - 15:30

Mr Teimur Osmanov, Agriculture Water Use Expert, Amelioration & Water Farm Open Joint Stock Company
Mr Rafig Verdiyev, Head of EPTISA Azerbaijan Business Development, Kura-III National Coordinator

Summary of Discussion

Due to lack of time (TL leaving in the afternoon of Day-II) and heavy traffic in Baku the team was forced to cancel some important meetings on Day-II (with the Azerbaijani Branch of REC Caucasus; Hydro-geology unit of the MENR) and change to a brief lunch meeting with the irrigation and agricultural water use expert, Mr Teimur Osmanov (accompanied by Mr Rafig Verdiyev). Ways of involving irrigation and agriculture institutions in the project National Coordination Committee meetings, as well as in developing a pilot RBMP and their close cooperation with other beneficiary institutions and the project management team were discussed during the meeting.