



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

EPIRB 3rd National Coordination Committee for Armenia *and* Akhuryan Basin Management Area - Stakeholder Consultation Meeting 20 June, 2014

Conference Hall, Berlin Art Hotel
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Agenda

Agenda of the EPIRB 3rd National Coordination Committee for Armenia and Akhuryan Basin Management Area Stakeholder Consultation meeting is attached to the minutes (Annex 1).

Participants

Signed List of Participants from the meeting is attached to the minutes (Annex 2).

Objectives:

- to report to the NCC members and other national and international stakeholders on the results of the project implementation to the date;
- to present planned activities for the next reporting period and up to the end of the project;
- to discuss proposed Pilot Projects in Armenia to address selected Programme of Measures of RBMP implementation;
- to present the necessary background information and the preliminary overview of the important water management issues for the Akhuryan pilot basin;
- to collect stakeholders' feedbacks concerning the identification of the most important water management issues;
- to support the development of the RBMP by discussing on the preliminary identified significant water management issues for the pilot river basin area.

Summary of discussions

Welcome

Mr. Harutyun Harutyunyan, Deputy Head of Water Basin Planning and Management Division of the Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia, opened the meeting. In his opening remarks Mr. Harutyunyan briefly presented the water sector reforms in Armenia during the last decade, steps made towards approaching to the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive, and stressed the important role of the EPIRB project in these works.

Ms. Nadya Boneva, EPIRB project Director. and Mr. Timothy Turner, EPIRB Project Team Leader, also made



opening remarks, in which they welcomed the participants of the meeting and highlighted the importance of periodical consultations with national and local beneficiaries and stakeholders to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of the EPIRB project.

I. PROJECT PROGRESS STATUS

The first session of the meeting related to the project progress status, and was chaired by Mr. Harutyun Harutyanyan.

First, Mr. Timothy Turner presented the overview of the EPIRB project. In his presentation Mr. Turner talked about the main activities of the project, results achieved so far, as well as the planned activities in the next few months. Afterwards, Mr. Vahagn Tonoyan, EPIRB project Country Water Management Expert (CWME) for Armenia, provided the outline of activities and results conducted in Armenia since the last NCC and plans for the next reporting period. In his presentation Mr. Tonoyan specifically focused on the activities and results achieved in Armenia. The last presentation of the first session was made by Mr. Timothy Turner, who briefly talked about the proposed pilot projects in Armenia and the planned implementation schedule.

During the Q&A session one participant from NGO (Aarhus Centre) made comments on the draft Pressures and Impact Analysis report that more details and annexes are missing from the report in order to consider it as draft RBMP. It was explained that this document is serving as the basis for the planning and the plan will include more details on what measures and resources are needed to address the key problems which are outlined as SWMIs. It was raised that the draft report does not include information on sand removal and no reference is made to ecosystems. For instance, it does not mention decline of fish populations in the Akhuryan River. In response, Mr. Tonoyan described the key steps of development of river basin management plans, and highlighted that pressure-impact analysis is one of the steps. Regarding the raised SWMIs, Mr. Tonoyan proposed that written comments are provided to the project, which the team in charge of development of RBMPs can study in detail and, if necessary, incorporate in the revised report.

Participants were also engaged in a discussion on the depletion of groundwater near Metsamor River and measures to be taken in order to prevent desertification. Similar problems are faced also in the Ararat valley. It was mentioned that in the Ararat valley surveys will be carried out in order to feed the Ararat Basin Management Plan to be developed by 2015. Recalculation of groundwater resources has to be re-done compared to the 1980s and reduction of 70% of the water outtake by the fish farms is planned.

Summarizing the results of presentations and discussions, Mr. Harutyunyan thanked EPIRB project for good progress achieved since the last NCC meeting, and asked participants of the meeting to provide written comments in two weeks time regarding the draft pressure-impact analysis report, the Armenian version of which was sent to all participants of the meeting.

II. INFORMATION SESSION

Ms. Magdolna Toth Nagy opened the consultation part of the meeting and mentioned the purpose of the stakeholder consultation meeting. With reference to the requirements of the WFD, she emphasized the importance of public participation, the phases when participation of the stakeholders is needed as a



minimum in form of consultations and active involvement. *(For more information see Annex 3)*

Mr. Aram Gevorgyan provided an overview of the development of the Akhuryan RBMP, with focus on the draft Pressure-Impact analysis report of Akhuryan River Basin Management Area. *(For more information see Annex 3)*

During the Q&A session no specific questions were raised regarding the draft report.

III. WORKING SESSION

Ms. Imola Koszta held a presentation focusing on the significant water management issues in the light of the WFD. On the other hand, she made an introduction and set the basis for the Working Group discussion. *(For more information see Annex 3)*

The WGs addressed the below questions:

1. *Do you agree that these are the key causes of water management problems?*
2. *Are there other significant water management issues that have not been considered?*
3. *Which are the top 3 SWMIs facing the Akhuryan Basin Management Area? (Please rank them, 1 being the highest priority and 3 the lowest).*
4. *How do you think these issues could be tackled / addressed?*

IV. BUILDING COMMON UNDERSTANDING

Mr. Gevorg Torosyan from the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Armenia reported back to the plenary on the results of the discussion from Group B, Hydromorphological alterations:

1. The Working Group agreed with the main causes of water management problems presented, and at the same times proposed also to consider the impact of climate change. This particularly relates to the impact of increased atmospheric air temperature and decrease precipitation on the hydromorphology of the basin. Another aspect that according to the working group should be taken into account, is the possible transboundary impact from Turkey, which intensively develops new hydro-technical structures, mainly reservoirs.
2. The Working Group indicated that reconstruction of Kaps Reservoir in Akhuryan basin might have significant impact on hydromorphology. As a result, hydrological regime in the reaches of Akhuryan River downstream of the reservoir, as well as change in feeding groundwater resources of the area might occur.
3. The following 3 significant water management issues were considered as of top priority in the basin according to the order presented:
 - Low level of public knowledge on protection of water resources, and low level of awareness;
 - Irrational use of water resources, including high level of water loss;
 - Weak cooperation between the agencies and institutions of the Ministry of Nature Protection and the Ministry of Territorial Administration both at national and basin levels, as well as low level of cooperation between the communities. Inadequate organization of compliance assurance, and inadequate level of coordination.



4. Correspondingly the following measures are proposed for the 3 significant water management issues identified by the Working Group as priority ones (according to the issues identified under questions 3 above):
- Increasing public awareness on water resources issues starting from pre-school education. Incorporation of environmental and water topics into the secondary education curricula, eco-education;
 - Introduction of water saving technologies (for example, rehabilitation of water supply networks, introduction of efficient irrigation methods, application of new technologies in fish farming and similar measures), and strengthening compliance assurance;
 - Strengthening of regulatory arrangements for inter-sectoral and inter-agency cooperation, particularly at basin and community levels, including data and information exchange and coordination of activities.

Mr. Ashot Abgaryan, Head of Akhuryan BMA of the Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia, reported back to the plenary on the outcomes of the discussion from Group A, Pollution (Point sources and Diffuse Sources):

1. The Working Group confirmed that all key causes of water management problems in Akhuryan BMA are properly selected and correspond to the actual situation in the basin.
2. As other significant water management issues, the Working Group highlighted the following:
 - Need to decentralize water management and strengthen the Basin Management Organization;
 - Insufficient surface and groundwater quantity and quality monitoring;
 - Inadequate compliance assurance;
 - Deteriorated condition of sanitary protection zones.
3. The working group finds that the following 3 significant water management issues are of top priority in the basin according to the order presented:
 - Solid waste landfills;
 - Communal-household wastewaters;
 - Agriculture.
4. In order to address the identified priority issues, the following measures are proposed for implementation:
 - Construction of sanitary landfills corresponding to international requirements in all major cities of the basin;
 - Introduction of solid waste recycling in the basin;
 - Construction of wastewater treatment facilities in all major cities of the basin, including biological treatment;
 - Introduction of good agricultural practices;
 - Strengthening of compliance assurance and control procedures;



- Development and improvement of pasture irrigation systems.

Mr. Tim Turner concluded that some of the issues mentioned above were related to the management of water resources and to the basis of the management structure (coordinator, responsible), which are not clearly defined. This should be addressed in the Water Resources Management Plan. Also, he raised the question of financing needed for the implementation of measures in order to tackle these issues. The mechanisms used for generation of funds and the needed amount have to be addressed in the RBMP.

Ms. Magdolna Toth Nagy thanked the participants for the comments provided and informed them that the comments will be taken into account by the consultants who prepared the draft SWMI report. She also asked for support and suggestions on how the stakeholders, especially from the NGO community, could be better motivated in the future to attend the consultations. She proposed to circulate the draft report for further comments electronically among those who were invited but did not attend. She also reminded that the next consultation will be held on the draft RBM plan, next year.

Ms. Imola Koszta on behalf of the project team thanked the participants for their involvement and input and she informed the participants that the draft report will be uploaded on the project website and comments are welcomed in the coming two weeks.