



## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

### EPIRB 3<sup>rd</sup> National Coordination Committee for Georgia *and* Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Pilot Basin - Stakeholder Consultation Meeting 18 June, 2014

Venue: Conference Hall Hotel Batumi Sheraton  
28 Rutaveli St. Batumi 6000, Georgia  
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#### Workshop background and objectives

EPIRB 3<sup>rd</sup> National Coordination Committee Meeting for Georgia and Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Pilot Basin - Stakeholder Consultation Meeting was held on June 18 in Batumi, Georgia. The objectives of the meeting were the following:

- 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 Georgia 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 Chorokhi-Adjaristskali 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 relevant pilot river basin.

#### Agenda

Agenda of the EPIRB 3<sup>rd</sup> National Coordination Committee for Georgia and Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Pilot Basin Stakeholder Consultation meeting can be found in Annex 1.

#### Participants:

Signed List of Participants from the meeting can be found in Annex 2.

#### Beneficiary institutions

- **Ms Mariam Makarova**, Head of Water Resources Management Service, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection
- **Ms Marine Arabidze**, Head of Environmental Pollution Monitoring Department, National Environmental Agency, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection
- **Ms Elina Bakradze**, Department of Environmental Monitoring NEA, MENRP Head of the laboratory
- **Mr Revaz Goradze**, Senior Specialist on Fish Biodiversity, the Black Sea Monitoring Division of the

National Environmental Agency

- **Ms Marine Mgeladze**, Biology Specialist, the Black Sea Monitoring Division of the National Environmental Agency
- **Ms Irine Baramidze**, Head of Environmental Laboratory, the Black Sea Monitoring Division of the National Environmental Agency

#### **Representatives of the Contractor Companies**

- **Ms Eliso Barnovi**, GLOWS/INRMW Program, Deputy Director/Technical Coordinator Georgia/Tbilisi
- **Ms Ketj Jibladze**, Programme Assistant, REC Caucasus

#### **Other stakeholder organizations and NGOs**

- **Ms Nargiz Bejanidze**, Assistant to the Minister, Ministry of Agriculture of Adjara Autonomous Republic
- **Ms Irma Abkhazava**, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Agriculture of Adjara Autonomous Republic
- **Ms Gulnaz Surmanidze**, NGO "Black Sea Eco-Academy"
- **Mr Ivane Tsiklauri**, Project Manager, UNDP project - Developing Climate Resilient Flood and Flash Flood Management Practices in Georgia

#### **Human Dynamics Consortium**

- **Ms Nadya Boneva**, HD Project Manager
- **Mr Timothy Turner**, KE1 - Project Team Leader
- **Mr Zurab Jincharadze**, KE2 - Deputy Team Leader/River Basin Management Expert
- **Ms Ketj Metreveli**, EPIRB Office Manager, Tbilisi Regional Office

#### **Regional Environmental Center for Central and Easter Europe – REC**

- **Ms Imola Koszta**, NKE Expert
- **Ms Magdolina Toth Nagy**, Senior Expert, project consultant,

### **Summary of discussions – brief overview**

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#### **Welcome**

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The 3<sup>rd</sup> NCC meeting was opened by **Ms Mariam Makarova**, Head of Water Resources Management Service of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia. She welcomed the participants and emphasized importance of the project in light of signing EU Association Agreement by Georgia, where Basin Management principles are considered as key tool for reforming water sector in the country. Welcoming remarks on behalf of the EPIRB Project were made by **Ms Nadya Boneva**, Project Manager from Human Dynamics Consortium and **Mr Timothy Turner**, Project Team Leader.

In his introductory notes, **Mr Zurab Jincharadze**, Project Deputy Team Leader, outlined the workshop objectives and expected outcomes of the joint meeting. After approval of the Agenda the meeting moved on to the information session on the project status.

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#### **I. PROJECT PROGRESS STATUS**

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**Mr Timothy Turner** presented project outlines and results between December 2013 and July 2014. He specifically highlighted completed and on-going activities designed to implement some key principles of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the benefits this process will bring to water sector of Georgia. Mr Turner also mentioned about changes in the project planning and implementation in order to deliver more targeted outputs. These changes were recommendations by Result Oriented Monitoring mission that took place in November-December 2013.

**Mr Zurab Jincharadze** presented detailed results of the project implementation in Georgia for the reporting period since the last NCC meeting in December 2013. Mr Jincharadze emphasized activities and results related to the designing Monitoring Programmes for surface and groundwater, as well as drafting River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the Chorokhi-Adjaristkali pilot basin. He also informed the audience about upcoming activities and plans for the next reporting period, including the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of Joint Field Survey in the basin, as well as data ‘gap filling’ exercise to obtain missing monitoring data. This activity will be conducted after identification and mapping surface water bodies according to the Risk Assessment criteria of being ‘at risk’, ‘possibly at risk’ and ‘not at risk’.

Further, the project Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader presented selected Pilot Project proposals for Georgia that should become an initial step for implementation of Programme of Measures (PoMs) once the RBMP is finalized and adopted by the Government

The following plenary session, chaired by **Ms Mariam Makarova**, summarised and commented presented project activities. The NCC made recommendations for the next reporting period strategy, emphasizing importance of project assistance in drafting secondary legislation for a new Water Code of Georgia, as well as good practice and skills the beneficiary institutes will gain from drafting first WFD complaint RBMP for the Chorokhi-Adjaristkali pilot basin.

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## II. INFORMATION SESSION

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**Ms. Magdolna Toth Nagy** (REC) 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 form of consultations and active involvement. (*For more information see Annex 3*) On the other hand, taking into account the low number of local stakeholders presented at the meeting, she invited and encouraged the participants to suggest modalities to motivate and improve the dialogue process with local stakeholders in the future.

**Ms. Eliso Barnovi**, from the *Consortium of REC Caucasus and Greentecs LTD*, provided an overview of the development of the Chorokhi-Adjaristkali RBMP, with focus on the draft Pressure-Impact analysis report of Chorokhi-Adjaristkali Pilot Basin. (*For more information see Annex 3*)

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

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## III. WORKING SESSION

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**Ms. Imola Koszta** (REC) 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 Chorokhi-Adjaristkali Pilot Basin? (Please rank them, 1 being the highest priority and 3 the lowest).*
4. *How do you think these issues could be tackled / addressed?*

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## IV. BUILDING COMMON UNDERSTANDING

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**Ms. Eliso Barnovi** reported back to the plenary on the results of the discussion from Group A, Pollution (Point

sources and Diffuse Sources):

1. The Working Group agreed with the main causes of water management problems presented.
2. The Working Group indicated as additional important pollutants / sources of pollution:
  - oil products;
  - turbidity caused by gravel and sand collection;
  - hazardous substances coming from industrial waste dumping sites (non-organized)
  - non-controlled storm water discharge
  - non-controlled rural wastewater discharge in surface water and groundwater
3. The following 3 significant issues were considered as of top priority in the basin according to the order presented:
  - Insufficient legislation on water management concerning abstractions, basin approaches are lacking and local features are not taken into consideration;
  - The institutional structures are not clear, responsibilities are mixed, affecting indirectly the water resources;
  - Incomplete database concerning water use, quality and quantity of waters (monitoring) and inspection results.
4. The issues identified under questions 3 above could be addressed by the central and local government, namely:
  - Ministry of Environment
  - Ministry of Agriculture
  - Ministry of Infrastructure
  - Ministry of Economy.

Mr. **Ivane Tsikaluri** reported back to the plenary on the outcomes of the discussion from Group B, Hydromorphological alterations:

1. The Working Group re-confirmed that the key causes of water management problems concerning hydromorphology are:
  - Fragmentation of the river by construction of hydroelectric power plants (cascading type)
  - Water abstraction for drinking water, irrigation and energy goals. (In case of HPPs the minimum flow below dams is 10%, which is catastrophic for the rivers and their ecosystems)
2. As other significant water management issues, the Working Group highlighted the following:
  - Catastrophic change of habitats and mezohabitats
  - Lack of fish paths and in some cases absences of fishes
  - Salvo water release/water discharge from HPPs for cleaning the reservoirs from sediments
  - Derivation of water from one basin to another
  - Activation of landslides
3. The working group ranked as priority significant water management issues the following:
  - Construction of dams and HPPs/cascades
  - Alteration of habitats and mezohabitats
4. In order to address the identified priority issues, the following measures were proposed for implementation:
  - Political support and compensation for the creation of non-commercial fisheries (salmon and other endangered species)
  - Establish the minimum ecological flow according to the international norms while taking into account the local circumstances
  - Establish minimum ecological cost in case of dams and HPPs construction, which could reduce the damage for the ecosystems, the 10% biodegradation in the river should be calculated
  - Inclusion of the above mentioned measures and notes into the environmental permissions (control and monitoring)
  - Involvement of the community and the relevant specialists at every decision making stage.

During the discussion session the question of discontinuance of sediment movements was raised due to HPPs, retaining the sediments in the upper part and affecting as such the biodiversity at the lower part of the

rivers. **Mr. Zurab Jincharadze** revealed that according to the preliminary findings of geologists and experts from the Ministry from last summer, the upper part of the cascades/huge water reservoirs present a threat for activation of landslides and floods.

Participants were also engaged in a discussion on the possible effects of climate change on the pilot basin. It was concluded that the impacts of climate change should be also examined and measures for gradual adaptation should be considered.

In addition, concerns were raised regarding the aquaculture, as these can be found in almost all of the villages and they might pose a source of pollution.

With regard of the construction of HPPs **Ms. Mariam Makarova** mentioned that HPPS with bigger capacity than 20MW are subject to ecological assessment. Furthermore, construction of fish paths is mentioned in all ecological reports and in the permit conditions this is one of the requirements for compliance. In case the participants are aware of any specific cases where this has been omitted, they are kindly requested to inform the supervising body of the Ministry of Environment.

**Mr. Ivane Tsikaluri** indicated that in many cases the HPPs constructors refuse to build the fish paths as the fall level is very high, that is why the issue of artificial fish breeding, red salmon of the Black Sea etc., was proposed by them.

**Mr. Zurab Jincharadze** said that the environmental impact assessments of HPPs include also fish paths and the project will attempt to look at the permits and to take it in consideration in the development of the programme of measures.

**Ms. Magdolna Toth Nagy** thanked the participants for the valuable feedbacks and active contribution, and indicated 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 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 or others who may be relevant for contribution. She also suggested that an article could be published in a more popular language in a local newspaper in addition to the project newsletter to raise awareness of local stakeholders about the significant water management issues and importance of the river basin management planning process. She also reminded that the next consultation will be held on the draft RBM plan, next year.

**Mr. Tim Turner** suggested a well-advertised open public meeting with reference to the draft RBMP, allowing anyone to come in.

**Mr. Zurab Jincharadze** also thanked the participants their contribution and added that the draft report will be published on the project website as well as distributed to the participants. Translation to Georgian language will be available after the report is finalized. He highlighted that this meeting was important, however the interest of stakeholders was lower than expected, for that reason more efforts are needed in contacting the local stakeholders.