

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)

Environmental Protection of International River Basins

Project Number: ENPI/2011/279-666

FIFTH INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT

(1 August 2014 – 31 January 2015)



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



Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project

Contract No. ENPI/2011/279-666

FIFTH PROGRESS REPORT

DRAFT

Submitted by: Consortium led by Hulla & CO. Human Dynamics
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1.1 PROGRESS REPORT

Project Title : **Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project**
 Project Number : Contract No. ENPI/2011/279-666
 Countries : Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine

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1.2 ABBREVIATIONS

BMI	Benthic Macro-invertebrates
BUVRs	River basin authority, Ukraine
CA	Contracting Authority
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
CIS	Common Implementation Strategy
CWME	Country Water Management Expert
DBA	Danube Basin Assessment
DBMP	Danube Basin Management Plan
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Commission
EQR	Environmental quality ratio
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
ENVSEC	Environmental and Security Initiative
EPIRBP	Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project (This Project)
EU	European Union
EUWI	European Union Water Initiative
GW	Ground waters
GLC	Gas-Liquid Chromatography
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JFS	Joint Field Survey
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
(N)KE	(Non) Key Expert
MAD	Maximum allowable discharge
MAC	Maximum Allowable Concentrations
MNP	Ministry of Nature Protection
MENR	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
MNREP	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Republic of Belarus
NCC	National Coordination Committee
NEA	National Environmental Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPD	National Policy Dialogue
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QA	Quality Analysis
QC	Quality Control
PoM	Programme of Measures
PWH	Protocol of Water and Health
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
SAWR	State Agency for Water Resources, Ukraine. Earlier – SCWM, State Committee for Water Management (Ukraine)
SW	Surface waters
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
WB	Water body
WFD	EU Water Framework Directive
WRMA	Water Resources Management Agency

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1.4 PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Project Title: Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project (**EPIRBP**)

Contracting Authority: European Commission – Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid

Project Starting Date 30 January 2012

Project Duration: 48 months, end date: 29 January 2016

Brief Description of the Project:

Reinforces current actions in environmental protection and water resources management, supported by previous EU funded trans-boundary projects in the region in terms of cooperation as well as convergence towards the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), by joint development of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in selected pilot river basins of the wider Black Sea region.

Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

Budget: €7.5 million

Objectives: The overall objective of the project is to improve water quality in the trans-boundary river basins of the wider Black Sea region and Belarus.

The specific objectives of this contract are:

- to improve availability and quality of data on the ecological, chemical, and hydro-morphological status of trans-boundary river basins including groundwater; and
- to develop River Basin Management Plans for selected river basins/sub-river basins according to the requirements of the WFD.

Results to be achieved by the Consultant:

The main results required to attain the Project objectives are:

1. Increased capacities of the respective national authorities for hydro-biological, chemical and hydro-morphological monitoring of water quality including groundwater; quality assurance procedures in laboratories in place; and
2. Increased technical capacities by means of development and implementation of River Basin Management Plans for selected rivers.

Actions in brief/Milestones:

Result 1 - Increased capacity for WFD compliant monitoring:

- *Assessment of current data and assessment tools availability by June 2012;*
- *Surveys to assist development of ecological monitoring status systems undertaken by September 2014;*
- *WFD-compliant monitoring programmes designed for pilot basins by November 2014;*
- *Determination of threshold values for classifying different water body types by June 2015;*
- *Training programme on laboratory QA/QC delivered by December 2013;*
- *Training programme on Biological and Hydro-morphological monitoring delivered by July 2015; and*
- *Final proposals for ecological status monitoring systems, by November 2015*

Result 2 - RBMPs are developed for all pilot basins:

- *Pilot basins are formally accepted by July 2012;*
- *River Basin Districts are mapped and characterised by July 2013;*
- *1st JFS and Kura III surveys undertaken by October 2013;*
- *Water bodies are defined and classified according to the WFD methodology by October 2013;*
- *Pilot projects contracted by July 2014 in all six countries;*
- *At Risk assessments undertaken and 2nd JFS and Kura III surveys undertaken by October 2014*
- *Programmes of Measures are developed by November 2014;*
- *Draft River Basin Management plans produced by January 2015;*
- *Gap-filling and 3rd JFS and Kura III surveys undertaken by October 2015 ; and*
- *Pilot projects implemented and RBMPs adopted by November 2015*

Key Beneficiaries:

<i>Armenia</i>	Ministry of Nature Protection
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
<i>Belarus</i>	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
<i>Georgia</i>	Ministry of Environment Protection
<i>Moldova</i>	Ministry of Environment
<i>Ukraine</i>	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources

Planned activities:**Activity 1. Improvement of hydro-biological, chemical and hydro-morphological monitoring and assessment of surface water bodies, including groundwater**

Activity 1.1 Review national monitoring systems and tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities

- *Task 1.1.1:* Summarise ongoing and completed support to the implementation of WFD-compliant monitoring procedures
- *Task 1.1.2:* Assess the current monitoring activities in the beneficiary countries
- *Task 1.1.3:* Conduct a legal and institutional gap analysis with respect to the WFD
- *Task 1.1.4:* Design and establish a project website

Activity 1.2 Support the implementation of countries' obligations under the Danube and Water Conventions

- *Task 1.2.1:* An analysis and report on the Ukraine's and Moldova's obligations under the ICPDR convention
- *Task 1.2.2:* An analysis and report on the Beneficiaries' obligations under the UNECE Water Convention

Activity 1.3 Develop WFD-compliant monitoring programmes, including hydro-biological and hydro-morphological elements and groundwater

- *Task 1.3.1:* WFD-compliant monitoring programmes designed for the pilot basins
- *Task 1.3.2:* Training courses in WFD-compliant monitoring prepared and presented
- *Task 1.3.3:* Country specific ongoing monitoring programmes are designed

Activity 1.4 Assist in the development of WFD-compliant tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities (ecological, chemical, hydro-morphological classifications)

- *Task 1.4.1:* Determine threshold values and Ecological Quality Ratios for determining water body status for each type of water body, including reference conditions
- *Task 1.4.2:* Draft guidelines on assessing the status of each water body
- *Task 1.4.3:* Prepare a web-based database system

Activity 1.5 Support the analytical quality control and quality assurance procedures

- *Task 1.5.1:* QA/QC procedures assessed and improved
- *Task 1.5.2:* Training courses on QA/QC procedures designed and held

Activity 1.6 Assess the needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment and training

- *Task 1.6.1:* Assessment and optimisation of laboratory analytical capacity
- *Task 1.6.2:* Assessments of the capacity building needs of the physiochemical monitoring programme

Activity 2. Development of joint River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for selected river basins

Activity 2.1 River Basin Analyses are undertaken

- *Task 2.1.1:* Selection and confirmation of the pilot basins
- *Task 2.1.2:* River Basin Analyses for the selected pilot basins

Activity 2.2 Water body identification and typology

- *Task 2.2.1:* Determination of River Basin Districts
- *Task 2.2.2:* Preliminary identification of water bodies
- *Task 2.2.3:* Typology of water bodies
- *Task 2.2.4:* Final identification of water bodies
- *Task 2.2.5:* GIS mapping of water bodies

Activity 2.3 Analysis of baseline situation

- *Task 2.3.1:* Preliminary classification of water bodies based on available data
- *Task 2.3.2:* Identification of gaps in data availability

Activity 2.4 Joint field surveys to cover the gaps

- *Task 2.4.1:* Survey design manuals for a joint field survey for each basin/sub-basin.
- *Task 2.4.2:* Joint field surveys are conducted
- *Task 2.4.3:* Water body classifications updated

Activity 2.5 Development of national and basin-wide Programmes of Measures

- *Task 2.5.1:* Pressures and threats identified.
- *Task 2.5.2:* Programmes of Measures prepared

Activity 2.6 Implementation of selected measures from the programme for pilot projects

- *Task 2.6.1:* Selection of Measures
- *Task 2.6.2:* Implementation of selected measures

Activity 2.7 Public involvement and awareness raising activities

- *Task 2.7.1:* Develop a communication strategy for each basin
- *Task 2.7.2:* Awareness building activities are undertaken throughout the project

1.5 SUMMARY OF PROJECT PROGRESS FOR THE MONTHS 31-36 OF THE PROJECT

At the request of the EC and in line with the Results Orientation Monitoring mission recommendations the emphasis of the progress reporting has been amended, focusing on the project results as well as activities.

Activity 0: Project Management Activities

Task 0.1: Planning, monitoring and reporting

Project continues to be implemented successfully to the revised workplan prepared in December 2013, annex 1. The extent of the project has been increased under Addendum IV (dated 10 December 2014) to include a third round of Joint Field Surveys and fourth round of Kura III surveys, which will help to validate the results from the reference sites for the selected water body types. For the validation process a minimum of three years continuous surveys is required under the WFD. The surveys will provide additional valuable information to support the design of the Ecological Status Classification System (ESCS) in particular defining the Environmental Quality Ratios (EQRs) and will be designed to fill any gaps in knowledge regarding priority substances identified in the RBMP during the 'at risk' assessments. The addendum will also fund the extension of the RBMP contracts which currently terminate with the production of the draft plans and do not include technical support during the public consultation and endorsement stages. There will also be further support to the River Prut working group, which under the guidance of ICPDR and the project, are working toward the production of a combined River Prut RBMP including Moldova, Ukraine and Romania.

In order to facilitate the work under the addendum, additional funds have been made available from the Incidental Expenditure budget to support increased technical assistance from the project key and non-key experts. The increased inputs will not only provide direct technical support but also enhanced training and ad hoc support to the pilot project implementation.

Dr Romina Alvarez replaced Mr Sveto Cheshmedjiev as the project biologist and key expert 3 under Addendum III (dated 14 August 2014). She will be responsible for the SW JFS, biological training and development of the Ecological Status Classification System. She joined the project in August and was able to accompany the JFS in Eastern Europe in September 2014.

A new non-key expert, Dr Bill Parr, has been introduced to the project team. Dr Parr is a senior biologist with extensive knowledge and experience of the implementation of the WFD. He will assist Dr Romina Alvarez in the design of the Ecological Status Classification system and application of the WFD in coastal zone.

The project remains on programme (see attached workplan Annex 1) with only minor adjustments and is currently on budget. The key delivery date for three draft RBMPs (Armenia, Belarus and Georgia) remains mid February 2015. The rest are due in mid-March 2015.

Adjustments to the workplan since the last Progress Report, number 4, include:

- The practical biological monitoring training to be implemented June/July 2015, ahead of the JFS, with final theoretical training on the ecological status classification system and delineation in early autumn;
- The 2015 JFS will take place in June and July 2015 and the Kura III surveys in April and September;
- The contracting of the pilot projects, except for one remaining pilot in Azerbaijan, is complete. If budgets allow there will be a last round of pilot projects in June, but these will be of limited size and scope;
- The design of the biological/ecological status system is a complex task and one which will only be partially fulfilled in the lifetime of the project. The draft design report has now been delayed until after the 2015 JFS and Kura III surveys and will be produced in November; and
- The second round of RBMP public consultation meetings has been delayed in order to allow the RBMP to be translated and distributed in the basins. The meetings will take place between March and April 2015.

None of these changes will impact on the overall project timeline and the project is scheduled to be completed on 29 January 2016.

Workplan implementation is being tracked using an upgraded management system including a new time-sheet format which allows inputs to be recorded at the sub-task level.

The third project Steering Committee Meeting was held in Minsk, Belarus on 7 October 2014 at which the 4th PR was approved – (see meeting report here: <http://www.blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib#reg-c-m>). Detailed technical presentations were made on the various project tasks and the beneficiaries were very active in asking questions. The finalisation of the RBMPs and their endorsement was a key area for discussion, as was implementation of specific national pilot projects. All countries stated their satisfaction with project progress, but Ukraine emphasised the amount of work which still had to be done in order to comply with the WFD. The EC Task Manager, Nicola Di Pietrantonio, briefed the meeting of the development of the EC strategy for 2014-2020 for Environment, Water and Climate Change under the ENPI East Programme (see below) and a potential follow-on project to EPIRB.

The project continues to submit national and regional monthly progress reports to the EU delegations and National Coordination Council members to improve national engagement and inter-sectoral coordination. Other reports, prepared during the 4th reporting period include and can be seen in the download section of the project website:

- Report on the 3rd Steering Committee Meeting, Minsk, 7th October 2014;
- Report on third RBMP workshop, Minsk, Belarus 6th October 2014;
- Report on the fourth RBMP workshop in Kiev, Ukraine, December 2014;
- Report on Joint Meeting of the ICPDR and the EPIRB Project on the data collection for the Danube RBMP involving MD, UA and RO and 1st Meeting of the EPIRB Project Prut WG, Chisinau, Moldova, August 2014
- Reports on Hydromorphological training, Chisinau, Moldova, September 2014
- Report on Joint meeting of the ICPDR and the EPIRB Project GIS Trainings towards data upload for the Danube RBMP 2015, Vienna, Austria, December 2014
- Guidelines for development of Programme of Measures and setting EQOs under WFD, September 2014.
- Guidelines on economic assessment of PoM under WFD, December 2014;
- Guidelines addressing Chemical Status of Surface Water Bodies for a Pressure-Impact Analysis/Risk Assessment according to the EU WFD, August 2014
- Pilot basin monitoring programmes, January 2015;
- Report on GW surveys in 2014, October and November 2014
- Report on 2nd meeting of EPIRB and ICPDR River Prut WG and DanubeGIS training, Vienna December 2014.
- Report on JFS in 2014, January 2015; and
- Report on Kura III surveys in 2014, December 2014

The Team Leader attended a meeting of the ENPI East Regional Projects on Environment, Water, and Climate Change in Brussels on 1 July and subsequently met with the EC Global Assessment team in Kiev and Minsk. The Assessment team's ToR was to assist the EC in the elaboration of a strategy for 2014-2020 for Environment, Water and Climate Change under the ENPI East Regional Programme. The project provided the team with feed-back on the sector priorities and potential outcomes over the next five years.

The Team Leader attended the Steering committee Meeting of Clima East in Brussels on 29 January 2015 and discussed potential collaboration events including a workshop addressing the issue of climate change adaptation in the preparation of RBMPs and in the water sector in general. The Team Leader also had the opportunity in January of meeting the new EC Task Manager, Laura Giappichelli, to discuss project progress and future developments.

In addition to the above, the deputy Team leader, Zurab Jincharadze, attended a meeting of the EUWI IWRM working group in Astana, Kazakhstan on 13 October at which he made a presentation of the project. He also attended the EMBLAS Steering Committee meeting in Istanbul on 4-6 November at which the possibility of holding a joint project workshop on monitoring in the coastal zone in compliance with both the Marine and Water Framework Directives was discussed.

The project maintains contact with key donor projects in each of the participating countries, in particular in Armenia and Georgia with USAID and in Moldova with UNDP.

Task 0.2: Risk management

Potential constraints, risks and assumptions have been assessed and respective corrective measures undertaken where necessary. The political unrest in the Ukraine remains of concern but there is no intention at present to re-locate the main Kiev project office to any other beneficiary country. A project event was successfully implemented in Ukraine during the progress reporting period (4th RBMP planning workshop) and further events are planned.

Task 0.3: Quality management

The project has made every effort to increase the quality and consistency of the terms of reference, meeting reports, and monthly and progress reports. In particular the project team has reviewed thoroughly the reports prepared by the RBMP contractors and those produced by pilot project contractors. Where necessary the project team has intervened to improve the quality of the reports. A specific mini workshop was held in Kiev in December to help the Ukrainian contractors to deliver the draft RBMP for the upper Prut and upper Dnieper by the end of January 2015.

Task 0.4: Stakeholder management

The team leader undertook missions to all six countries during the reporting period to inform and consult with the beneficiaries about project progress and pilot project implementation. During the reporting period National Coordination Committee (NCC) meetings were held in:

02 September 2014 - 3rd NCC/PC meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan

16 December 2014 - 4th NCC meeting in Yerevan, Armenia

19 December 2014 - 4th NCC meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia

The NCCs in all three countries were well attended and the project received good feed-back, particularly on the implementation of the pilot projects. The 4th NCC meetings in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, will be held early in the next reporting period.

RESULT 1: Increased capacity for WFD compliant monitoring**Activity 1.1 Review national monitoring systems and tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities**

Status: Completed

Activity 1.2 Support the implementation of countries' obligations under the UNECE Water and Danube River Protection Water Conventions**Task 1.2.1: An analysis and report on the Ukraine's and Moldova's obligations under the ICPDR convention**

Status: On-going

A second tripartite (Moldova, Ukraine and Romania) River Prut WG meeting was held in Chisinau, Moldova on 20th August. The purpose of the meeting was to define the data requirements for the Danube River Basin Management Plan and introduce the countries to the DanubeGIS platform, enabling Moldova and Ukraine to comply with their obligations under the Danube Convention.

A third meeting of the Prut was convened in December in Vienna to provide training for the nominated experts from Ukraine and Moldova on DanubeGIS and agree their ToR. Contracts were issued for the population of the DanubeGIS in January 2015 and will be completed at the end of February 2015.

The project has developed a good working relationship with the ICPDR secretariat and has managed to construct a useful bridge between the three River Prut basin countries. It is envisaged that these linkages will be strengthened as the component River Prut RBMPs are developed working towards an umbrella plan in the next twelve months.

Task 1.2.2: An analysis and report on the Beneficiaries' obligations under the UNECE Water Convention

Status: On-going

The project has continued to have close consultations with the Secretariat of the UNECE Water Convention regarding coordination and collaboration through the EU Water Initiative and specific project activities. In preparing the pilot projects in Georgia and Azerbaijan, particularly those relating to the development of

secondary water legislation, the project has consulted closely with the Secretariat to ensure that there is no overlap.

Activity 1.3 Develop WFD-compliant monitoring programmes, including hydro-biological and hydro-morphological elements and groundwater

Task 1.3.1: WFD-compliant monitoring programmes designed for the pilot basins

Status: On-going

The project experts have been working closely with the RBMP contractors and beneficiaries have prepared WFD consistent SW and GW monitoring plans for each of the seven pilot basins (see annex 2). The plans have been approved by the beneficiaries and are to be included in the draft RBMPs – see section 2.

Task 1.3.2: Training courses in WFD-compliant monitoring prepared and presented

Status: On-going

An initial hydromorphological training course linked to the water body at risk assessments was given in the Caucasus sub-region in Telavi, Georgia on 3 and 4 July and repeated in the EE region on 3 and 4 September in Chisinau, Moldova. Biological monitoring training was postponed because of the change in project personnel and will now take place in reporting period 6. See attached calendar of events (annex 3). There has been a request by the beneficiaries for training in delineation and typology of water bodies which will take place in Tbilisi in reporting period 7, but the exact date has not been fixed. There will also be theoretical training in ESCS development later in 2015.

Task 1.3.3: Country specific ongoing monitoring programmes are designed

Status: On-going

Activity 1.4 Assist in the development of WFD-compliant tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities (ecological, chemical, hydro-morphological classifications)

Task 1.4.1: Determine threshold values and Ecological Quality Ratios for determining water body status for each type of water body, including reference conditions– to be undertaken in 5th reporting period, months 31-36.

The results of JFS and Kura III surveys in 2013 and 2014 have been assessed by the biological, hydromorphological and chemical experts and a number of inconsistencies and incongruities have been identified. A technical team meeting was convened in Kiev on 10 and 11 December 2014 to discuss these issues and development options for the regional Ecological Status Classification System. There is a proposal, currently under discussion, to use a single biological monitoring methodology for both the JFS and the Kura III surveys; the Finnish methodology, currently used on Kura III surveys, will provide more information and lead to development of a more robust ESCS. The final decision will be made in at a JFS design workshop to be held in May 2015.

The 2015 JFS and Kura III will re-survey the reference sites identified in 2013 and identify bad and poor sites in order to provide for each water body type a status range and develop the EQRs. The project will not attempt to identify reference sites for all the water body types and therefore the ESCS will be limited.

Status: On-going

Task 1.4.2: Draft guidelines on assessing the status of each water body– to be undertaken in 6th reporting period, months 37-42.

Guideline documents for SW biological and hydromorphological monitoring and GW monitoring were produced in the 4th reporting period and guidelines addressing Chemical Status of Surface Water Bodies for a Pressure-Impact Analysis/Risk Assessment according to the EU WFD, were produced in August 2014 (annex 4). All guidelines will be compiled into a single document in the next reporting period.

Status: On-going

Task 1.4.3: Prepare a web-based database system – to be undertaken in 5th reporting period, months 31-36.

Status: On-going

The DanubeGIS platform is being used in the River Prut basin for reporting by Ukraine and Moldova to ICPDR for the River Danube Basin Management plan. As part of the exercise, training in the system was given to GIS practitioners from Ukraine and Moldova by the ICPDR secretariat. It is envisaged that similar training will be given to experts from the other four countries in the next reporting period, linked to the water body delineation and typology training and take place in Tbilisi.

The NKE Paul Buijs undertook missions to the Caucasus countries in September and to Belarus in October to develop WFD compliance strategies following similar missions to Ukraine and Moldova. The expert met with the monitoring working group in Armenia but was unable to meet with the group in Georgia which was still being established. The strategies for Moldova and Ukraine have been reviewed by the beneficiaries and comments will be taken on board in the final documents. The draft documents for the remaining countries have been prepared and sent to the countries for comment. The final documents will be produced in March 2015 at the beginning of reporting period 6.

Activity 1.5 Support the analytical quality control and quality assurance procedures

Status: Completed

Task 1.5.1: QA/QC procedures assessed and improved

Task was completed in reporting period 2

Task 1.5.2: Training courses on QA/QC procedures designed and held

Task was completed in reporting period 3

Activity 1.6 Assess the needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment and training

Status: Completed

Task 1.6.1: Assessment and optimisation of laboratory analytical capacity

This task was completed in reporting period 2.

Task 1.6.2: Assessments of the capacity building needs of the physiochemical monitoring programme

This task was completed in reporting period 2.

The Final report summarising the assessments, support and inputs to each national water laboratory by the project expert is attached as Annex 1.5_1.6.

Status of the level of implementation of project Result-1:

Activity No.	Assessment so far	Objectives and aims for next reporting period
Result 1: Improved data availability and quality		
1.1	Reviews of the national monitoring systems for SW and GW completed in the Inception phase.	n/a
1.2	Regional Meeting Minsk to discuss support activities Coordination meeting held with ICPDR Secretariat to discuss information for Danube Basin Assessment and RBMP and development of River Prut RBMP ToR for River Prut Management Plan WG and ICPDR support Draft River Prut Pressures at Impacts and At Risk assessments in Moldova and Ukraine (see 2.3) Draft agendas agreed for second River Prut	Third River Prut RBMP tripartite WG meeting to be held in March 2015 to discuss submissions for the Danube River Basin Management Plan and next steps in development of umbrella River Prut RBMP. Continued coordination with the EUWI and UNECE Water Convention regarding future workplans and activities.

	<p>WG meeting</p> <p>Coordination with UNECE and OCED on EU WI activities</p> <p>Revision of R. Prut GIS format to DanbeGIS and harmonisation of delineation methodology</p>	
1.3	<p>Design and implementation of 2013 Joint Field Surveys (see task 2.4) for status classification system development</p> <p>Design of 2014 JFS for status classification system development and implementation in Caucasus countries</p> <p>Regional monitoring and classification workshop – Chisinau, Moldova</p> <p>SW and GW 2013 JFS analysis and reporting</p> <p>GW classification for pilot basins</p> <p>Kura basin Spring 2014 ecological surveys and reporting</p> <p>Guidelines for GW monitoring and classification at sub-regional level</p> <p>Guidelines for SW ecological monitoring and classification systems</p> <p>Guidelines for SW hydro-morphological and chemical status monitoring and classification systems at sub-regional level</p> <p>Training in hydro-morphology delivered in Caucasus and EE sub-regions</p>	<p>Development of regional/sub-regional hydro-biological and hydro-morphological monitoring and classification systems</p> <p>2015 JFS survey design to assist development of Kura ecological monitoring and classification system (see 2.4) and RBMP gap filling</p> <p>Guidelines for SW chemical status monitoring and classification systems at sub-regional level</p> <p>Training in water body delineation and typology</p> <p>Training in hydro-biological and ecological monitoring/classification system development at sub-regional level</p>
1.4	<p>Draft National long-term strategies for the development of compliant WFD monitoring programmes developed in all six countries.</p>	<p>Danube GIS platform developed and populated for the pilot River basins.</p> <p>National long-term WFD compliance strategies finalised in all six countries.</p>
1.5	<p>Support the analytical quality control assurance procedure (4 missions) and provide training.</p>	None
1.6	<p>Assess the needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment and capacity building.</p>	None

RESULT 2: RBMPs are developed for all pilot basins**Activity 2.1 River Basin Analyses are undertaken****Task 2.1.1: Selection and confirmation of the pilot basins****Status:** Completed**Task 2.1.2: River Basin Analyses for the selected pilot basins****Status:** Completed**Activity 2.2 Water body identification and typology****Task 2.2.1: Determination of River Basin Districts****Status:** Completed**Task 2.2.2: Preliminary identification of water bodies****Status:** Completed**Task 2.2.3: Typology of water bodies****Status:** Completed**Task 2.2.4: Final identification of water bodies****Status:** Completed

The final identification of the water bodies is being undertaken by the contractors as part of the RBMP, see sub-task 2.3

Task 2.2.5: GIS mapping of water bodies**Status:** Ongoing**Activity 2.3 Analysis of baseline situation****General progress**

During the reporting period the RBMP contractors have in general proceeded well with the production of reports on:

- Environmental objectives;
- Programme of measures; and
- Economic Analysis and prioritised measures report.

All the contractors are on programme to complete the draft River Basin Plans by midFebruary (Armenia, Georgia and Belarus) or mid-March (Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine) giving sufficient time for the public consultation processes. There has been some concern with progress in Azerbaijan and the project team has provided additional support to the contractor and will continue to do so. In Ukraine the contractor is required to develop two plans (Upper Dnieper and River Prut). To assist with this work the project team held a mini-workshop in Kiev in December to help with the final assembly of the two plans. The team were happy with the progress being made by the Ukrainian consultants.

The project held two RBMP workshops during the planning period, the first in Minsk, Belarus, on 6th October 2014, prior to the Steering Committee Meeting, on the setting of Environmental Objectives and development of the Programme of Measures and a second in Kiev, Ukraine on 8th December on the Economic Analysis and compiling the RBMP. The two meeting reports are given in annex 5. Prior to the workshops the project team prepared detailed methodologies for the relevant topics based on EU guidelines. These guideline documents are uploaded to <http://www.blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib#guid-doc>

The four workshops delivered have been very well received. They have been designed around practical interactive sessions during which the participants have been able to ask questions directly of the project experts. The workshops have enabled the contractors to confer with each other and align their approaches.

The beneficiaries have been able to engage more closely with the RBMP process and better understand the detailed requirements of the WFD. The workshops have also allowed the project team to actively steer the process whilst not impairing the contractual relationships. The contractors have appreciated the knowledge transfer and have been able to build good working relationships with the beneficiaries.

During the planning period the project team prepared designs for surveillance and operational monitoring programmes (ecological, hydro-morphological, chemical and GW), sub-task 1.3.1., for each of the pilot basins based on the Pressures and Impact and At Risk analyses undertaken by the contractors as part RBMP. The monitoring plans were submitted to the beneficiaries and contractors for comment in November and were discussed during a special session in the Kiev workshop in December. The plans were finalised in early January 2015 (see annex 2) and sent to the contractors for inclusion in the draft RBMP.

Task 2.3.2: Identification of gaps in data availability

Status: Completed

Activity 2.4 Joint field surveys to cover the gaps

Task 2.4.1: Survey design manuals for a joint field survey for each basin/sub-basin

Reports were prepared for the 2014 surveys and with the release of funds from the incidental expenditure budget the project will now be able to undertake a full set of surveys in 2015, both SW and GW. This means that at the end of the project there will be four years of Kura III surveys and three years of EPIRB SW and GW surveys, sufficient to establish reference sites for a number of water body types, particularly those in the upper catchments, and will enable the team to make proposals for regional, albeit limited, Ecological Status Classification Systems. The design of the third EPIRB JFS for support in development of the Ecological Status Classification System will take place in May at a special meeting in Tbilisi, at which the all project monitoring experts will attend. The number of sites to be surveyed in the five days available in each country is strictly limited and therefore it was decided not to expand the number of reference sites even though some water body types that have not yet been characterised.

The project team are currently questioning whether to change the biological sampling methodology used as part of the JFS. The Finnish methodology used by the Kura III surveys is more robust and would produce more information regarding the EQRs which will be developed over the next six months. The project team will make this decision at the May meeting in Tbilisi as well as outline the final ESCS proposals.

The EPIRB SW gap-filling JFS have not yet been designed. The gap-filling JFS will take place in July/August and will comprise principally of updating the chemical status and hydro-morphological monitoring. The final design of the monitoring surveys will take into account the results from the RBMPs and will be finalised in May 2015.

Currently it is envisaged the GW monitoring will target three pilot basins only, they being:

- Armenia – to investigate high levels of arsenic recorded in certain locations;
- Belarus – determine over-exploitation of GW around the city of Minsk, also subject of a pilot project; and
- Moldova – investigate the GW salinity and determine whether the cause is natural or anthropogenic.

The results of the 2014 surveys have been reviewed and are summarised in the annual report (see annex 7). This year the new KE3 Biologist, Romina Alarez, has taken the opportunity of looking at this years' data and that of 2013 in detail and has raised some concerns with regard to the QA/QC. Also the reporting formats are inconsistent, making analysis difficult. These questions are being addressed. The project monitoring team will put forward proposals for a common database based on an agreed set of metrics for the most likely biological elements.

Task 2.4.2: Joint field surveys are conducted

During the reporting period the following surveys have been undertaken:

Kura III surveys:

Azerbaijan – 13-17 October

Armenia – 20-24 October

Georgia – 27-31 October

EPIRB GW surveys:

Moldova - 3-5 September

Task 2.4.3: Water body classifications updated**Status: Completed****Activity 2.5 Development of national and basin-wide Programmes of Measures****Task 2.5.1: Pressures and threats identified.****Status: Completed****Task 2.5.2: Programmes of Measures prepared****Status: Completed**

The project provided guidance on the setting of Environmental Objectives and timeline for attaining Good Ecological Status for all water bodies and criteria for the exemptions under the WFD – see guidance document in annex 4 of this report as well as they are uploaded on the project website. The advice took into account the low level of funding available in most of the countries and the lack of monitoring programmes currently operational.

The development of the Programme of Measures has been difficult for the RBMP contractors and in some cases the involvement of the beneficiaries has been lacking. The guidance document prepared by the project team advised that the PoM should focus on a limited set of Directives (UWWT, Nitrates, Flood,). As well as to address in the first six year planning period mainly the soft measures required to implement the WFD, avoiding large scale investments which were not under the direct mandate of the beneficiary Ministries and Basin Organisations. In this way, it is hoped that endorsement of the RBMP would be easier and not blocked by key Government stakeholder, thus establishing the planning process. Whether this strategy has worked will be seen over the next twelve months during the public consultation and endorsement period.

The contractors were advised not to devote too much time to a full WFD economic analysis since it requires a lot of effort and the project team doubted whether the necessary data and information would be available. For instance, many of the countries do not have a water allocation plan which is at the basis of economic analysis. We did however expect them to prepare detailed cost estimates of the PoM interventions.

Activity 2.6 Implementation of selected measures from the programme for pilot projects**Task 2.6.1: Selection of Measures**

Although this sub-task is complete there remains a small budget available to fund a limited number of desk studies. Applications will be requested from the countries in May and contracted in June.

Status: Completed**Task 2.6.2: Implementation of selected measures**

All the pilot projects, with the exception of the three pilots in the Ukraine investigating municipal waste pollution in the Carpathian National Park and Upper Prut basin and a specific pilot in Azerbaijan looking at the pollution pressures in a critical sub-basin, are under implementation. Their status is given in a summary table contained in annex 8. The Ukrainian pilots will begin implementation and the Azeri pilot will be tendered at the beginning of March 2015.

It has been noticeable that none of the beneficiaries have been able to produce competent ToR for these relatively small projects. In some instances the project team has had to work hard with the beneficiaries to interpret the pilot project aims and activities. It is recommended that in any follow project that the countries be given specific training in the project cycle and project development.

Activity 2.7 Public involvement and awareness raising activities

Task 2.7.1: Develop a communication strategy for each basin

Steps were taken concerning the endorsement of the CS&CPs. Draft letters have been prepared and submitted to the Team Leader for signature and for submission to the Ministries to request official endorsement letters for support of the communication and stakeholder activities.

Half a day meeting, held back-to-back with the NCC meeting was organised in Baku, Azerbaijan, September 2, 2014 targeting invited key stakeholders. The objectives of the meeting were:

- to present the necessary background information and the preliminary overview of the important water management issues for the relevant pilot basin;
- to collect stakeholders' feedbacks concerning the identification of the most important water management issues; and
- to support the development of the RBMP by discussing on the preliminary identified significant water management issues for the relevant pilot river basin.

Presentations, minutes of the meeting, lists of participants and photos from the stakeholder consultation meeting in Baku were provided to the EPIRB project team.

In order to guide the public participation process concerning the draft RBMP, a presentation was held at the 4th Regional RBMP Workshop, on 8th of December, 2014 in Kiev. The presentation focused on the general requirements of the EU WFD and experiences from case studies in Europe, as well as on activities carried out in the EPIRB project, visions for the second phase of the consultations and modalities for evaluation and reporting.

Task 2.7.2: Awareness building activities are undertaken throughout the project

The 4th and the 5th issue of the project Newsletter, entitled "In the Flow", was published online and printed in English and Russian. The 4th issue featured among others interviews with beneficiaries from Azerbaijan, information about the pilot projects focusing on groundwater. The 5th issue included interview with representative of beneficiary from Ukraine and put a focus on the pilot projects focusing on harmonising water legislation in the beneficiary countries.

Each issue printed in 1000 copies: 350 EN and 650 RU (100 for each beneficiary country, exception Ukraine receiving 150, having 2 pilot basins), was sent to the Regional Project Offices for dissemination. Furthermore, mass-email notification concerning the availability of the Newsletter with direct link to the project website (RU and EN) was sent to the relevant stakeholders (approximately 240 e-mail addresses). Currently, altogether 11 newsletter subscription requests were received from stakeholders from Republic of Moldova, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia.

The development of the 6th issue of the newsletter has started in January 2015; content related inputs have been collected.

In parallel, development of the brochure focusing on Significant Water Management issues commenced, having prepared the text and draft design and layout.

The project website is one of the key communication and information facilities for the EPIRB project so it is important that it is user-friendly, attractive and up to date. Content is crucial for an informative website, therefore input was provided concerning the sub-sites of the pilot basins. According to the statistical data of the project website, covering the period 01 September 2014 - 27 January 2015, increase of the number of the page visits and sessions can be observed, namely 6240 page calls and 2,940 sessions were opened.

The top 5 most requested pages were:

1. / (Start page);
2. /en/e-learning-materials;
3. /en/downloads-lib;
4. /en/pilot-basins/Upper-Dnieper-River-Basin; and
5. /en/news

The Russian version of the video e-learning entitled: “Groundwater Sampling Guide – Specific to the EPIRB project” together with downloadable hand-out was developed (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOaMnBOD-pY>). The English version had 518 “views” and 3 “likes” up to date, while the RU version has received 162 “views”. Information dissemination on the availability of the video was done through targeted mass e-mails as well as with a published article in the newsletter. In future key project material and products will be loaded onto the C4dev Blog page as well as the web site.

The English version of e-learning video on biological sampling was finalised and released on 22nd of January, 2015. The video received 59 “views” and 5 “likes” up to date. The Russian version of the video is under finalisation. In addition, all preparatory work and visual design concerning the video on hydromorphology has been carried out:

Status of the level of implementation of project Result-2:

Activity No.	Assessment so far	Objectives and aims for next reporting period
Result 2: RBMP Production		
2.1	Selection of pilot river basins and sub-basins	
2.2.	Water body delineation and typology (System A) Harmonisation of GIS to Danube GIS format in the River Prut (draft) Revised and rationalisation water body delineation based on risk assessment (see 2.3)	Harmonisation of River Prut delineation to Romanian system (see 1.2)
2.3.	ToR for RBMP compliant with WFD and national requirements Tendering and appointment of implementers Inception reports approved Pressures and Impacts assessments Draft water body at risk assessments Finalisation of water body at risk assessments Design of surveillance and operational monitoring programmes (SW and GW) Establishment of Environmental Objectives Programme of Measures and Economic Analysis (2.5)	Preliminary draft RBMP translated and disseminated at the basin and national levels Training in water body delineation and typology

2.4.	Joint Field Surveys for 2013 and 2014 Kura III and EPIRB JFS GW and SW completed and reports prepared.	2015 JFS Gap filling designed and partly executed. 2015 JFS ESCS support designed and partly executed 2015 Kura III Spring surveys implemented
2.5.	Environmental Objectives established Draft Programme of Measures Economic analysis	Preliminary draft RBMP translated and disseminated at the basin and national levels
2.6.	Development of selection criteria for pilot projects Selection of pilot projects Drafting of Terms of Reference and appointment of implementers	Implementation and monitoring of pilot projects
2.7.	Development and maintenance of website Development of project news sheet 'In-flow' and 6 monthly issue Final Basin Communication Strategies and Plans Publication of RBMP timetable and overview	Notification of draft RBMP availability and consultation opportunities Publication of draft final RBMP and summary leaflet Stakeholder consultations and other selected measures

Summary of Implementation:

The progress made in the implementation of the project activities could be summarised as follows:

Result 1: Increased capacity for WFD compliant monitoring

Result 1 is approximately 75% complete.

Activity 1.1, Review national monitoring systems and tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities; Activity 1.5, Support the analytical quality control and quality assurance procedures and Activity 1.6, Assess the needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment and training are completed.

The laboratory performance in all countries needs support as evidenced by the review of the 2013/2014 JFS data and therefore it is recommended that this be a critical component of any future EPIRB II project.

Activity 1.2, Support the implementation of countries' obligations under the UNECE Water and Danube River Protection Water Conventions, and Activity 1.3, Develop WFD-compliant monitoring programmes, including hydro-biological and hydro-morphological elements and groundwater, the major sub-activity components, are 70% and 60% complete respectively. Activity 1.4, Assist in the development of WFD-compliant tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities (ecological, chemical, hydro-morphological classifications) is 70% complete.

Activities 1.3 and 1.4 are being implemented in parallel. There is much work to be done and in terms of construction of the Ecological Status Classification Systems and capacity building and training in the region. The lack of trained biologist in some of the countries is particularly pressing, although the skills do reside in the academic institutions. Tasks to be completed in 2015 under Activity 1.4 include the development of compliant databases and determination of threshold values and EQRs. Monitoring guidelines are complete.

Result 2: RBMPs are developed for all pilot basins

Result 2 is approximately 85% complete.

Activity 2.1, River Basin Analyses, is 100% complete. Activity 2.2, Water body identification and typology, is 100% complete. Activity 2.3, Analysis of the baseline situation, is 100% complete. According to original workplan Activity 2.4 is 100% complete, however an additional round of JFS (SW and GW) in 2015 made possible by a re-adjustment of the incidental expenses budget, means that this activity can only be reported as 75% complete. Activity 2.5, Development of national and basin-wide Programmes of Measures (PoM) is 100% complete. Implementation of selected measures from the programme for pilot projects, Activity 2.6, has commenced and is 50% complete. Implementation will continue until December 2015.

The draft RBMPs will be disseminated and the public consultation will commence in February 2015. The public consultation and internal endorsement will continue until December 2015.

A detailed Output Performance report, showing the activities' progress by colour codes is attached in Annex 9.

1.6 SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT PLANNING FOR THE MONTHS 25-32 OF THE PROJECT

Activity 1.1 Review national monitoring systems and tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities

Task 1.1.1: Summarise ongoing and completed support to the implementation of WFD-compliant monitoring procedures

Task 1.1.2: Assess the current monitoring activities in the beneficiary countries

Task 1.1.3: Conduct a legal and institutional gap analysis with respect to the WFD

Task 1.1.4: Design and establish a project website

The website will continue to be improved. The draft RBMP will be posted on the project website as well as those websites of the beneficiaries. The comments received as part of the public consultation will be collated and also posted on website (see activity 2.7).

Planning of the implementation of tasks for Activity 1.1 as well as breakdown of inputs by KEs and CWMEs are tabled below:

Activity	Pilot/Country	2015						Inputs in report period	
		Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	July	KEs,/WDs	NKEs,/WDs
1.1.4 Support to web-site	AM							KE1 - 2 KE2 - 3	CWMEs - 10
	AZ								
	BY								
	GE								
	MD								
	UA								

Activity 1.2 Support the implementation of countries' obligations under the Danube and Water Conventions

Task 1.2.1: An analysis and report on the Ukraine's and Moldova's obligations under the ICPDR convention

The third River Prut working group meeting will be held in April 2015, provisionally in Kiev in conjunction with ICPDR. At the meeting the information for the Prut basin (Moldova and Ukraine) in DanubeGIS format for submission for the Danube RBMP will be reviewed and the next steps for combining the three RBMPs (Moldova, UA and Romina) will be assessed.

Task 1.2.2: An analysis and report on the Beneficiaries' obligations under the UNECE Water Convention

The project team will maintain close coordination with UNECE secretariat regarding implementation of the Convention and execution of the EUWI including attending National Policy Dialogues. On a number of occasions the NPD and NCC meetings have been combined and the meeting costs shared, this arrangement will continue.

Planning of the implementation of tasks for Activity 1.2 as well as breakdown of inputs by KEs and CWMEs are tabled below:

Activity	Pilot/Country	2015						Inputs in report period	
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	KEs,/WDs	NKEs,/WDs
1.2 Support to Danube and UNECE Conventions	AM							KE1 - 10 KE2 - 5	CWME 10 NKE 10
	AZ								
	BY								
	GE								
	MD								
	UA								

Activity 1.3 Develop WFD-compliant monitoring programmes, including hydro-biological and hydro-morphological elements and groundwater

Task 1.3.1: WFD-compliant monitoring programmes designed for the pilot basins

Task 1.3.2: Training courses in WFD-compliant monitoring prepared and presented

Training in biological monitoring will take place in the two sub-regions prior to the SW JFS in May and July. The training will be practical and address monitoring of biological elements which are relevant to the sub-region, in addition to macro-invertebrates (macro-phytes, phyto-benthos, phyto/zooplankton). Theoretical training on the development of the Ecological Status Classification Systems will be delivered in autumn 2015. Training on water body delineation and typology and DanubeGIS will be delivered in September 2015. The dates of the training are given in the event calendar contained in annex 3 of this report. In general the training has been delayed because of changes in project personnel and additional commitments to survey work.

Task 1.3.3: Country specific ongoing monitoring programmes are designed

The final WFD compliance strategy documents will be completed and sent to the beneficiaries for comment at the end of April 2015. The finalisation of the strategies will be done in close consultation with country beneficiaries, coordinated by the CWMs. These are preliminary documents and are meant to provide initial guidance to the countries on implementation of the WFD and the steps needed to be taken in terms of improvement of their national monitoring programmes. It is assumed that these documents will in the future be revised and extended. The assessment has shown that all the countries will have to undertake a considerable amount of work, in some cases over many years, to make them compliant with the WFD. The strategies outline the legal, institutional, capacity building and investments requirements which are needed in order to comply by a fixed date, which varies between the countries. Those countries which have signed association agreements with the EU are under greater pressure to implement reforms and their strategies are based on the agreed timelines and reflect the urgency of the actions.

Activity 1.4 Assist in the development of WFD-compliant tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities (ecological, chemical, hydro-morphological classifications)

Task 1.4.1: Determine threshold values and Ecological Quality Ratios for determining water body status for each type of water body, including reference conditions

The full results of the 2013 and 2014 EPIRB JFS and Kura III surveys are available and initial analyses have been undertaken – see reports in annex 7. The analyses have thrown up some concerns regarding the quality control in a number of the participating laboratories. Particularly with regard to the general conditions which will be addressed in the design of the 2015 JFS in May.

In the design of the Ecological Status Classification system the next steps are envisaged:

- Agree the methodology and metrics to be used;
- Agree general conditions and HM parameters;
- Select the development of an ESCS for upland catchment, as an example, based on principally macro-invertebrates;
- Assume a single ESCS for the whole region and calculate EQRs using Kura III and JFS data;
- Design and construct database for the upland ESCS, with the flexibility to be used for other ESCSs; and
- Develop proposals for lowland river and lake ESCSs for implementation in EPIRB II

The majority of this work will be undertaken in the next reporting period, with the final report issued in November 2015, after analysis of the 2015 survey results. The key step will be a technical team meeting in Tbilisi in May to discuss the initial proposals, which will be held back-to-back with the JFS design meeting.

It should be appreciated that such systems are very preliminary since no inter-calibration of the reference sites will have been undertaken for a further two years.

Task 1.4.2: Draft guidelines on assessing the status of each water body

The final monitoring guidelines will be produced in April 2015 for Chemical Status Monitoring. These guidelines along with the guidelines for Biological, Hydromorphological and Ecological monitoring will be combined in a single document to be published at the end of the next reporting period.

Task 1.4.3: Prepare a web-based database system

The products of the DanubeGIS from the River Prut will be released to the countries for comments in August 2015 and comments sought how they may be adapted to meet country specific requirements. Training in DanubeGIS will be given in September 2015.

As described above, Task 1.4.1, a common format will be developed for Ecological monitoring data as part of the ESCS development.

Planning of the implementation of tasks for Activity 1.3/1.4 as well as breakdown of inputs by KEs and CWMEs are tabled below:

Activities	Country	2015						Inputs in report period	
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	KEs, WDs	NKEs, WDs
1.3/1.4 Monitoring and assessment programs	AM							KE1 30	CWME 0
	AZ							KE2 0	NKE 40
	BY							KE3 30	
	GE								
	MD								
	UA								

Activity 1.5 Support the analytical quality control and quality assurance procedures

Completed

Activity 1.6 Assess the needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment and training

Completed

Activity 2.1 River Basin Analyses are undertaken

Completed

Activity 2.2 Water body identification and typology**Task 2.2.1: Determination of River Basin Districts****Task 2.2.2: Preliminary identification of water bodies****Task 2.2.3: Typology of water bodies****Task 2.2.4: Final identification of water bodies****Task 2.2.5: GIS mapping of water bodies**

The tasks under activities 2.1/2.2 are now complete and results are incorporated into the draft RBMPs (see activity 2.3)

Activity 2.3 Analysis of baseline situation**Task 2.3.1: Preliminary analysis and classification of water bodies based on available data****Task 2.3.2: Identification of gaps in data availability**

Since the final RBMP workshop, which took place in December 2104 in Kiev, the RBMP contractors have been working to complete the draft documents, which are scheduled to be delivered between 1 February and

31 March 2015. Draft documents have been received and reviewed by the project team from Armenia, Belarus and Georgia. The amended versions will be published within the next two weeks, ahead of the public consultation meetings – see Task 2.7. The draft RBMPs for Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine are to be delivered for review in March.

During the next planning period, the RBMP contracts will be extended to assist the beneficiaries with the public consultation process and amending the RBMP in light of received comments from the stakeholders. The contractors will also where necessary amend the plans in light of the results of the JFS and specific pilot projects. The beneficiaries will also be supported by the project team, critically KE 1 and KE2, Birget Vogel the RBMP NKE and the CWMEs.

Planning of the implementation of tasks for Activity 2.1 as well as breakdown of inputs by KEs and CWMEs are tabled below:

Activities	Pilot basin	2015						Inputs in report period	
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	KEs, WDs	NKEs, WDs
2.1: RBA	AM							KE1 20	CWME
	AZ							KE2 50	100
	GE							KE3 0	NKE 10
	Dnieper							KE4 0	
								KE5 0	

These tasks are incorporated into task 2.1 and the development of the river Basin Management Plans and are reported above.

Activity 2.4 Joint field surveys to cover the gaps

Task 2.4.1: Survey design manuals for a joint field survey for each basin/sub-basin.

Task 2.4.2: Joint field surveys are conducted

The third round of surveys will take place on the following dates:

- Kura III Spring surveys: 6-24th April 2015;
- Kura III Autumn surveys: 12-30th October 2015;
- GW JFS: 20th April – 9th May 2015;
- SW JFS gap filling – 15th June – 4th July 2015; and
- SW JFS ESCS surveys - 15th June – 4th July 2015.

The gap-filling surveys will focus on priority substances in the five basins at known hotspots or strategic points and the results will feed into the final RBMPs.

There will be no direct full-time project supervision of the Kura III or JFS surveys and the contractors and beneficiaries will have full responsibility for their implementation. However, the project experts and CWMEs will check that the national sample the correct sites and sampling protocols are observed. Additional support may be required if it is decided to amend the sampling methodology for the macro-invertebrates.

Task 2.4.3: Water body classifications updated

Planning of the implementation of tasks for Activity 2.4 as well as breakdown of inputs by KEs and local experts are tabled below:

Activities	Pilot basin	2014						Inputs in report period	
		Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 15	KEs, WDs	NKEs, WDs
2.4: JFS to cover the gaps	AM							KE1 10	CWME 50 NKE 0
	AZ							KE2 12	
	GE							KE3 20	
	Dnieper							KE4 0	
	Prut							KE5 20	

Activity 2.5 Development of national and basin-wide Programmes of Measures**Task 2.5.1: Pressures and threats identified.****Task 2.5.2: Programmes of Measures prepared**

The tasks under activities 2.5 are now complete and results are incorporated into the draft RBMPs (see activity 2.3)

Activity 2.6 Implementation of selected measures from the programme for pilot projects- not planned**Task 2.6.1: Selection of Measures****Task 2.6.2: Implementation of selected measures**

The contracts for the remaining pilot projects will be let in March 2015. There has been a delay in the contracting of the final pilot projects in Ukraine and Azerbaijan because of a lack of clarity in the pilot project objectives. However, these delays will not impact on the implementation of the pilots which will be completed by November 2015.

Contracting of the pilot projects associated with strengthening of the GW and SW monitoring systems in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova has been challenging, with the project team having to provide the beneficiaries with considerable help to draft the contractual documents. The construction will occur in the spring of 2015 and there will be a six month maintenance period. The groundwater KE will provide support for the two GW pilot projects.

In general the stage reports produced have been of good quality and have met the beneficiaries' standards. A summary of the pilot project status is given in annex 8

Planning of the implementation of tasks for Activity 2.6 as well as breakdown of inputs by KEs and CWMEs are tabled below:

Activities	Pilot basin	2015						Inputs in report period	
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	KEs, WDs	NKEs, WDs
2.6: Implementation of programme of measures	AM							KE1 25	CWME 50
	AZ							KE2 40	
	GE							KE3 0	
	Dnieper							KE4 0	
	Prut							KE5 10	

Activity 2.7 Public involvement and awareness raising activities

Task 2.7.1: Develop a communication strategy for each basin

In order to accelerate the endorsement of the CSs & CPs during the next 6 months the Ministries will be approached to send an official endorsement letter with the view to provide support for the further communication and stakeholder involvement activities.

Having in mind that the CS & CPs are considered “living documents”, their specific messages and tentative timeline will be further updated based on the outcomes/milestones of the project.

Organisation of stakeholder consultation meeting on the SWMIs back-to-back with the NCC meeting for:

- Central Kura Pilot Basin: 2 September 2014, Baku (Azerbaijan)

Task 2.7.2: Awareness building activities are undertaken throughout the project

Activity 2.7 Public involvement and awareness raising activities

- *Task 2.7.1: Develop a communication strategy for each basin*

Organisation of stakeholder consultation meetings on the draft RBMPs, back-to-back with the NCC meeting, according to the below tentative schedule:

- 17 March: Public Consultation for Belarus, in Minsk;
- 24 March: Public Consultation for Georgia, in Batumi;
- 26 March: Public Consultation for Armenia, in Gumri;
- 23 April: Public Consultation for Central Kura – Azerbaijan, in Ganja;
- 29 April: Public Consultation for Ukraine, in Kiev;
- 05 May: Public Consultation for Prut – Moldova, in Chisinau; and
- 20 May: Public Consultation for Prut – Ukraine, in Yaremche.

With a duration of one day, the face-to-face consultations will aim to discuss the draft pilot RBMPs and receive feedback and comments, including the Programme of Measures (PoMs). The organisation of the meetings will involve close cooperation with local NGOs.

Task 2.7.2: Awareness building activities are undertaken throughout the project

Through the NCWMs and the EPIRB project team, the respective EU Delegations in the countries will be continuously informed about the communication and visibility activities. Close cooperation, consultation on issues relevant for the PA&PI tasks and coordination of activities in line with EU’s approach is foreseen with the relevant Press and Information Officers/contact persons.

The stakeholder database will be continuously updated and amended with the relevant stakeholders for each pilot basin also in the future.

Activities related to raising awareness about the project activities:

- publication of Newsletters No. 6 in March, No. 7 in June, No. 8 in September;
- finalisation of brochure for each pilot basin, presenting the SWMIs; the leaflet will be published early on in March, to ensure that RBMP process and the water problems in focus are made aware for “recipients”. The leaflet will be available in electronic and printed version;
- preparation of brochure on draft RBMPs;
- finalisation of: RU version of the e-learning focusing on biological sampling; EN and RU version of the e-learning on hydromorphological assessment;
- preparation of video e-learning on physico-chemical sampling; and

- to contact local media, Aarhus focal points and officials responsible for PR from beneficiary Ministries and competent water authorities, in order to increase visibility of the project/ achievements in project countries, to mobilise better stakeholders, as well as to increase ability of the public to understand how the issues discussed at the consultation meetings (draft RBMPS and PoMs) are relevant to their lives..

Activities	Pilot	2015						Inputs*	
		Feb	March	April	May	June	July 15	KEs, WDs	NKEs, WDs
2.7.	AM							KE1 3	CWME 50
	AZ							KE2 10	
	GE							KE3 0	
	Dnieper							KE4 0	
	Prut							KE5 0	

1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

General Conclusions

The project has maintained its momentum over the last six months and is on programme for most activities. There has been some slippage with the delivery of the Ecological Status Classification System and the biological training due to mainly a change in project personnel with Sveto Cheshmedjiev being replaced by Romina Alvarez as KE3 Biologist. The difficult technical nature of the ESCS has also slowed its development and the project has introduced a new NKE, Dr Bill Parr, to help the KE3 with this task.

The RBMPs are on programme and planning for the second round of public consultation meetings in March/April is well in hand. There is some concern about weak ownership by the beneficiaries of the RBMP which will need to be addressed over the next six months. It is important that the beneficiaries take over the technical leadership of the planning process whilst the project provides technical assistance to them and to their consultants. They must adapt the plans to meet their needs and conditions.

The RBMPs are still too technical and too long and don't address effectively the target audience, again a point to be addressed in the next planning period. The release of incidental expenses to extend the RBMP contracts to support the beneficiaries during the public consultation and endorsement period will be critical. There will also be further support from the project team with inputs from KE1, KE2, KE5 and the NKE, Birgit Vogel.

The additional JFS and Kura III surveys funded from the incidental budget are welcomed since they will provide the essential baseline data for the development of the ESCS, but they will put additional work pressure on the project team, in particular KE3, KE5 and CWMEs. If the budget allows, the surveys will be fully escorted by the project team and certain countries and surveys will be observed and QA/QC procedures checked. Instead there will be more attention to the analysis (both biological and chemical) and storage of samples undertaken by the participating laboratories where some weakness has been identified. The project NKEs (Peter Roncak and Paul Buijs) will spend more time overseeing the sampling and in the laboratories during the next JFS to ensure the QA/QC procedures are met.

Overall there has been little change to the project programme, with the project scheduled to be completed in January 2016.

The incidental expenditure budget will be reviewed in July, at the end of the next reporting period to ensure that the maximum amount of incidental expenditure will have been usefully spent and not wasted. This may mean an additional allocation per country for implementation of pilot projects.

Coordination with other EC regional and national projects and other donors has improved with increased activity of the NWMEs. There has been close and valuable coordination with ICPDR with regard to the River Prut which is set to continue with the development of a tri-partite RBMP and training in DanubeGIS. Coordination with UNECE has, in conjunction with OECD, been through the EUWI and the National Policy Dialogues, rather than the Helsinki Convention. The project had wanted to cooperate with the Convention Secretariat in the development of a trans-boundary RBMP in the upper Kura but the involvement of other donors, principally UNDP GEF has precluded that initiative. The project has maintained its links with the UNDP EU EMBLAS project attending the SCM in Istanbul in December and re-affirming the proposal to hold a joint workshop on monitoring in the coastal zone in Batumi, provisionally in autumn 2015. Contacts were also made with the Clima-East project and proposals for a joint workshop on adaptation and mitigation measures in the water sector were discussed.

The political situation in Ukraine is being constantly monitored and its impact on the project implementation, particularly the operation of the project office in Kiev. At present the main problem is financing of project through Kiev, with strict currency controls in place and an instable banking system.

Recommendations and Conclusions regarding Activity 1.2:

The cooperation with ICPDR continues to be very valuable for the two Convention member states Ukraine and Moldova. The technical support from the Secretariat with the development of the DanubeGIS for the River Prut and regionally is excellent and something the project will be keen to exploit in the next planning period. There is still more work to be done on the bringing together of the River Prut basin plans. This will be tackled at the next River Prut WG, provisionally set for March 2015 but now likely to be delayed. The first step will be to combine the Ukrainian and Moldovan plans and then to combine them with the Romanian plan which will prove to be a more difficult task and one which may need to be postponed for a follow-on project. The assistance of the Government of Moldova and Ukraine and the offices of ICPDR will be sought to engage Romania in development of a combined plan.

The project is now focusing its collaboration with the UNECE Convention secretariat on implementation of the EUWI and promotion of its activities through the National Policy Dialogues.

Recommendations and Conclusions regarding Activities 1.3/1.4:

This is the most important period for the development of the ESCS. A number of key questions need to be addressed regarding the design of the ESCS which will be a first representative step in the long-term construction of a regional and national systems. The project will focus on the upper catchments developing one or two example systems based on macro-invertebrates but tailored to different classes of pressures. The final product will be presented in a report (including 2015 JFS and Kura II survey results) in November, but the thinking on development, including the database development, will take place in the next four months.

Training is going to be a key aspect of the next planning period, and will include training in biological monitoring training, GIS, water body delineation and typology and ESCS development. This training programme has been delayed because of other project pressures and now has to be accelerated.

Recommendations and Conclusions regarding Activities 2.2 -2.6:

The RBMP development has gone well with draft plans being produced on programme and in general meeting the ToR. However there are concerns that the documents are too technical and do not address the target audience properly, which somewhat undermines the public consultation process. The project team will work with the contractors throughout the public consultation stage to make the plans more assessable to the general public and a non-technical audience. Ownership is also of concern and the beneficiaries will need to be reminded that this is a government document and should not be treated as a 'pilot' project plan which can be abandoned whenever convenient.

The pilot projects are progressing well although in terms of quality they are understandably a mixed bunch. In those countries where there is a clear water strategy, such as in Belarus and Armenia, the project products are first rate. In other countries more direction is needed by the project team to maximise the results.

Recommendations and Conclusions regarding Activities 2.7.:

Good communication and collaboration with the EPIRB team and the RBMP development and implementation teams in each country/pilot basin is crucial. In addition, cooperation with local NGOs and other actors is crucial in spreading the word and in supporting the consultation process. In order to increase trust in the public participation process, it is recommended to appoint independent facilitators for the working group discussions in addition to the involvement of project team members.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Revised Workplan

Annex 2: WFD consistent SW and GW monitoring plans for each of the seven pilot basins

<http://blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib#mon-prog>

Annex 3: Events calendar

Annex 4: Guideline for addressing Chemical Status of Surface Water Bodies for a Pressure-Impact Analysis/Risk Assessment according to the EU WFD

<http://www.blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib>

Annex 5: Meeting reports:

- i. Meeting Report from the 3th RBMP workshop, Minsk
<http://blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib#rbmp-worsh>
- ii. Meeting Report from the 3th SCM, Minsk
<http://blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib#reg-c-m>
- iii. Meeting Report from the 4th RBMP workshop, Kiev
<http://blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib#rbmp-worsh>

Annex 6: Annual report on GW monitoring (Armenia, Belarus, Moldova) – surveys 2014

<http://www.blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib>

Annex 7: Reports on 2014 EPIRB JFS II and Report on JFS Kura III

<http://www.blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-lib>

Annex 8: List of Pilot Projects and status

Annex 9: Output Performance report