



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Upper Dnieper Pilot Basin - Stakeholder Consultation Meeting

10 July, 2014

Conference-hall, Republican Study Center of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus
50, Mendeleeva Lane, building 4, 220037, Minsk, Belarus
Tel.: (+ 375 17) 299 97 80, Fax: (+ 375 17) 299 91 59
<http://www.oos.by>

Agenda

Agenda of the Upper Dnieper Pilot Basin Stakeholder Consultation meeting is attached to the minutes (Annex 1).

Participants

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

Objectives:

- to present the necessary background information and the preliminary overview of the important water management issues for the Upper Dnieper 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.

Summary of discussions

Welcome

Mr. Sergey Zavyalov, Head of the Department Regulation of Pressures on Air and Water Resources of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus, opened the meeting. In his opening remarks, Mr. Zavyalov welcomed the participants and stressed the importance of the present consultation meeting.

The opening remark was followed by the round of introduction of the participants.

I. INFORMATION SESSION: SETTING THE SCENE

The first session of the meeting, focused on providing background information on the project and on the identified important water management issues and was chaired by Mr. Aleksandr Stankevich.

Ms. Jovanka Ignjatovic introduced the purpose and importance of the meeting. She made reference to the requirements of the WFD concerning public information and consultation and the phases when participation of the stakeholders is needed as a minimum in form of consultations and active involvement. *(For more information see Annex 3)*

Mr. Zurab Jincharadze presented the overview of the EPIRB project. In his presentation, Mr. Jincharadze introduced the main activities of the project, results achieved so far, as well as the planned activities in



the next few months, such as a new round of JFS for data gap filling, workshops for supporting the development of the RBMPs etc.

During the Q&A session participants were interested whether the draft report on Pressures and Impact and Water Bodies at Risk will be available for the public. It was confirmed that the reports will be accessible on the project website as well as on the website of the Central Research Institute for Complex Use of the Water Resources and access to any other background documents will be also ensured.

Mr. Sergey Zavyalov pointed out that the President of the Republic of Belarus signed the new Water Code, entering into force in May 2015. The new Code requires the development of RBMPs for all river basins, and relevant manual on the development of the draft RBMP will be shared by the Ministry.

Mr. Vladimir Korneev provided an overview on the development of the Upper Dnieper RBMP, with focus on the draft Pressure-Impact analysis report and water bodies at risk. *(For more information see Annex 3)*

The participants were engaged in a discussion concerning contaminants coming from the upper sections and pressures posed by fisheries. In case of fisheries, even though for water discharge special licence is required, there is evidence on the lack of compliance checking. Mr. Korneev pointed out that the draft report relies on official/certified data. It was added that in Belarus there are 300 monitoring stations, 70 reference ones, and 8 joint stations with Russia. Last year a special project was financed for monitoring. The issue of updating the names of factories and industry sites in the draft report was raised. Clarification concerning criteria used for identification and assessment of water bodies at risk was requested from the project team. It was indicated that in the framework of the project, a guidance document addressing hydromorphology and physico-chemistry for pressure-impact analysis/risk assessment according to the EU WFD was prepared and used for the development of the draft report.

Mr. Zavyalov recalled that the new Water Code, not in force yet, is in compliance with the requirements of the EU WFD, and will be accompanied by documents and technical regulations on hydrobiology and chemistry aspects for the assessment of the quality of surface waters.

II. WORKING SESSION

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

The WGs addressed the below questions:

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

III. BUILDING COMMON UNDERSTANDING

Mr. Aliaksandr Pakhomov, reported back to the plenary on the results of the discussion from Group A, Pollution. The group indicated that the economic actors in the river basin lack territorial, administrative and inter-agency integration and the economic interests have a higher priority than environmental objectives.



Among the main water problems the following issues were mentioned:

- Existing water monitoring systems do not allow full assessment of anthropogenic pressures coming from diffuse pollution sources;
- Water bodies are insufficiently studied from hydrology and hydromorphological point of view;
- Low level of environmental education;
- Inappropriate organization of water supply and sanitation systems of small settlements, cottages and summer houses;
- Lack of legislation and regulation concerning the establishment and operation of livestock production facilities;
- Depression cone in the Minsk agglomeration area due to groundwater exploitation.

The working group suggested the below measures in order to address some of the above mentioned issue:

- Improve the monitoring systems/networks, including establishment of new sites, new types of monitoring points in order to monitor the impacts of diffuse pollution
- Improve legislation concerning establishment of animal farms, having focus on the ecological requirements and not only on economic interests.

Mr. Titov Konstantin, presented to the plenary the outcomes of the discussions from Group B, Hydromorphological alterations. First, he explained in details the approach and criteria used in the draft report, concerning the identification of water bodies at risk from hydromorphological point of view. He mentioned that currently there is no hydromorphological monitoring system in place and the hydromorphological monitoring protocol is under testing. With regard to the prioritization of the main problems, he pointed out water extractions and related problems, and amelioration systems influencing the water regime. The violation of continuity and the lack of fish paths was identified as a concern, specifically because no other compensation measures are in place.

During the Q&A session the participants raised the question of the benefits/impacts of the reservoirs lacking fish paths, but used for fisheries. The consultants developing the draft reports declared that for the present reports this characteristic was not studied from this point of view, however it is planned for the following stage.

It was pointed out that in reality the construction of fish paths is included in the plan of the HPPs, but only in the 2nd phase, generally not being implemented. The discussion highlighted the importance of the legislation, with specific regard to the strongly modified river sections, which should follow and be in line with the views of the technical experts. Concerning the development of the RBMP and mainly in addressing the social, economic and environmental aspects, support is needed in the whole planning cycle, not only in the development phase, but also in the 2nd cycle. In this context, Ms. Jovanka Ignjatovic mentioned as example the case when NGOs set the environmental objectives very high but did not consider the economic aspects.

Mr. Vladimir Korneev, informed the participants that the EPIRB project will draft Guide/recommendations for improving the monitoring systems and more focus should be put on the hydromorphological issues. He added that river training is monitored every six year, straightening of rivers is registered.

Ms. Jovanka Ignjatovic thanked the participants for the comments provided and informed them that the



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

Contract No. ENPI/2011/279-666



Funded by the European Union and Implemented by a Consortium led by Hulla & CO. Human Dynamics

comments will be taken into account by the consultants who prepared the draft SWMI report. She informed the participants that the draft report will be uploaded on the project website and comments are welcomed in the coming period. She draw attention to the project Newsletter and the recently developed e-learning on Groundwater sampling and reminded that the next consultation will be held on the draft RBM plan, next year.