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EPIRB Project Activity 2.7

Public involvement and awareness raising activities

Task 2.7.1: Develop a communication strategy for each basin

Communication Strategy and Plan for the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Pilot Basin



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TABLE OF CONTENT

ACRONYMS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
PART I: BACKGROUND FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE PILOT BASINS	3
1. The Legal and Policy Framework	3
1.1. The Water Framework Directive.....	3
1.2. Implementation of the WFD	5
1.3. The relevant UNECE Conventions	6
2. The Objectives and goals of the Communication Strategies for Pilot Basins	7
2.1 The Stakeholders.....	8
2.2 The Elements of the Communication Strategies for the Pilot River Basins	10
2.3 Implementation and update of the Communication Strategies and Communication Plans..	15
PART II: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE	17
CHOROKHI-ADJARISTSKALI PILOT BASIN	17
3. Short description of the situation in the pilot basin and identification of needs and challenges the strategy needs to consider.....	17
3.1 Legal requirements in force (national/international)	18
3.2 On-going and past activities to build on	18
4. The goals and objectives of the Communication Strategy for the Pilot Basin.....	19
4.1 Key stakeholders to reach.....	21
4.2 Existing opportunities/structures to reach stakeholders and inform/involve them.....	22
4.3 The best methods/channels of communication	22
4.4 Key message areas of the communication strategy	23
PART III: COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE CHOROKHI-ADJARISTSKALI PILOT BASIN	25
5. Activities.....	25
6. Realization and financing of communication and public involvement activities	28
7. Monitoring, evaluation of success	28
ANNEX 1: The Water Framework Directive (WFD) - Short summary of the provisions on access to information and public participation.....	31
ANNEX 2: UNECE Conventions.....	32
ANNEX 3: Categories of stakeholder groups.....	35
ANNEX 4: Term of Reference Communication Committee	37
ANNEX 5: List of Stakeholders Chorokhi-Adjaristskali pilot basin	38

ACRONYMS

Aarhus Convention	Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
CC	Communication Committee
CWME	Country Water Management Expert
DRB	Danube River Basin
DRPC	Convention on Co-operation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube
EPIRB	Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project
EU	European Union
Helsinki Convention	UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
HPP	Hydropower Plant
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MENRP	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NCCs	National Coordination Committees
PoM	Programme of measures
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RBM	River Basin Management
RBC	River Basin Council
REC	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
WFD	Water Framework Directive

INTRODUCTION

This Communication Strategy has been prepared in the context of the project “Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project (EPIRB)” funded by the European Commission – Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid and implemented between January 2012 and January 2016 by the consortium led by Hulla & Co “Human Dynamics”.

The overall objective of the project is to improve the quality of water in the trans-boundary river basins of the wider Black Sea region and Belarus. The specific objectives of this project 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 (RBMPs) for selected river basins/sub-river basins according to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

The project targets the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

There are two main overall project results expected:

- increased capacity of the respective national authorities for hydro-biological, chemical and hydro-morphological monitoring of water quality incl. groundwater; quality assurance procedures in place in laboratories, and
- increased technical capacities by means of development and implementation of RBMPs for selected river basins/sub-river basins, according to the requirements of the WFD.

Under the Activity 2 - development of joint RBMPs for selected river basins- of the project, it is foreseen that communication strategies will be developed for each basin (Task 2.7.1), and awareness building activities will be undertaken throughout the project. (Task 2.7.2) The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) was contracted in April 2013 to carry out/support these tasks in line with the overall Communication and Visibility Plan developed in the inception phase of the project. The Communication and Visibility Plan includes a general communication strategy and specific activities dedicated to communication and the visibility for the overall EPIRB project, with the goals:

- to raise awareness around the project and its communication activities, objectives and impact;
- to develop effective, appropriate messaging of interest to the target groups and initiatives.¹

The First Progress Report of the project foresees the development of comprehensive Communication Strategies and detailed Communication Plans for each basin following the completion of the River Basin Analysis in the countries and the delineation and classification activities.

The pilot basins were selected and confirmed during the inception phase, as follows:

¹ See: Communication and Visibility Plan prepared within the EC-funded project “Environmental Protection of International River Basins”. The overall objectives of the Communication and Visibility Plan are as follows: ensure timely communication to relevant State establishments and/or organisations; ensure effective communication between groups; ensure timely notices for requirements/meetings; ensure optimum results for all communications and project expectations; measure the results of the communication strategy execution and revise accordingly.

- Belarus/Ukraine – Upper Dnieper River ;
- Moldova/Ukraine – Prut River;
- Armenia – Akhuryan and Metsamor rivers;
- Azerbaijan – Agstafachay, Tovuzchay, Shamkirchay and Ganjachay rivers; and
- Georgia – Chorokhi-Adjaristskali basin.

In order to ensure consistency among the Communication Strategies and Plans for the above mentioned pilot basins, the following methodology has been undertaken: a general common approach has been developed and is described in the Part I of this document, Background for Developing a Communication Strategy for the Pilot Basins, and a specific strategy and plan has been developed for each pilot basin adapting the general approach to the given conditions. These latter are described in the current document for the Chorokhi basin: in Part II, Communication Strategy for the Chorokhi - Adjaristskali Pilot Basin., and Part III, Communication Plan for the Chorokhi - Adjaristskali Pilot Basin.

The Communication Strategies and the Communication Plans for Pilot River Basins cover the aspects of communication, information access and public participation. They are developed fully in compliance within the overall Communication and Visibility Plan of the project and the EU Visibility Guidelines.

PART I: BACKGROUND FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE PILOT BASINS

1. The Legal and Policy Framework

Since the main objective of the project is to develop and implement RBMPs for the selected river basins according to the requirements of the WFD (2000/60/EC), the requirements for access to information and public involvement of WFD are taken into account in the first place when developing and implementing the Communication Strategies and Plans for the Pilot Basins. In addition, the obligations under relevant international agreements, such as the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki Convention) its Protocol on Water and Health, regional conventions, such as the Convention on Co-operation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube (Danube River Protection Convention, DRPC), as well as the national legislation in the project countries are also examined and taken into consideration. These requirements are briefly summarized in this chapter.

1.1. The Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) which is in force since December 2000, provides an integrated, coherent and harmonized framework for river basin management and comprises public involvement as an important and integral part of the planning process. It includes several provisions and articles in order to ensure the information and involvement of the public in the different phases of the development and implementation of the RBMPs.

The Directive establishes three levels of information and involvement:

- regular information provision ensuring proper information for the public of the planned measures and on the progress or their implementation in order to enable the involvement of the public (Preamble, provision 46);
- consultation on the timetable and work programme for the production of RBMP including statements of the consultation measures, the interim overview of significant water management issues identified in the river basin, and on the draft copies of RBMP (which need to be published and made available for commenting by the public including users) (Article 14);
- active involvement of all interested parties, in particular in the production, review and updating of the RBMPs(Article 14).²

In addition to the above mentioned active information provision, access to background documents and information used for development of the draft river basin management plan should be provided on request (Art. 14).

² Directive 2000/60 /EC of the European parliament and the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

The Directive sets a six month timeframe for the public for the submission of written comments, in order to allow active involvement and consultation on the above documents, and it also defines the time when the above mentioned documents should be made available for consultation. The RBMPs, according to Annex VII, must also summarize the public participation measures and should evaluate their results and impact on the plan. (See more details in Chapter 3 and Annex 1.)

Two project countries, Moldova and Ukraine located in the Danube basin are also parties to the **DRPC** and have already committed along with the Danube countries for the joint and basin wide implementation of the EU WFD as a clear priority (Resolution of the ICPDR Ordinary Meeting, in 2000 in Sofia). In another resolution, all contracting parties agreed – including the Non EU Member States - to make all efforts to arrive at a coordinated international RBMP according to the requirements of the EU WFD. To implement the WFD as a priority in the Danube River Basin (DRB) has also been confirmed in the Danube Declaration that was signed in the frame of an ICPDR Ministerial Meeting on 13 December 2004 (Vienna).³

Moldova and Ukraine have actively participated in the activities under the DRPC including the development of a basin-wide Danube River Basin District Management Plan (2009) adopted in February 2010 by all contracting parties in the frame of a Ministerial Meeting. The development of the RBMP included as interim steps the development of Danube Basin Analysis (2004) and reports on the implementation of the Joint Programme of Measures. Currently, the Danube RBMP 2015 is being prepared and the discussion on the Danube Basin Analysis 2013 is in process. Ukraine has also participated in the development of the Tisza River Basin District Management Plan (adopted in 2011). These processes have included the implementation of public participation activities as well, according to the WFD. The contracting parties to the DRPC and the Convention for the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution have established a strategic partnership and in 2007 they have signed a declaration on the enhancement of cooperation, which includes also a strong commitment to, among others, "promoting new activities for the sustainable development in the context of both Danube and Black Sea Conventions and WFD implementation, starting with the development of the Programme of measures (PoM) in 2007."⁴

³ The Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC) forms the overall legal instrument for cooperation and transboundary water management in the Danube River Basin. The DRPC was signed on 29 June 1994 in Sofia (Bulgaria), by eleven of the Danube Riparian States and the European Union, and came into force in October 1998. Today, the number of contracting parties increased to 14 countries plus the European Union. See: Draft Overview Report, Status of Country Implementation and Proposals for Support, prepared in January 2013 within the EPIRB Project Activity 1.2, Support to Country Implementation UNECE Water and Danube River Protection Conventions, p. 9-13.

⁴ Declaration of the Ministers in Charge of Water Management of the Contracting Parties to the Danube River Protection Convention and the Convention for Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution on the Enhancement of Cooperation (Bucharest, 23 February 2007), page 3. In the Declaration the Ministers „Confirm their strong commitment to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the protection of the environment in the Danube and Black Sea Region” by: -among others, - ...”promoting new activities for the sustainable development in the context of both Danube and Black Sea Conventions and WFD implementation, starting with the development of the Programme of Measures in 2007.”

1.2. Implementation of the WFD

All project countries committed in some form, although in different pace, for harmonising their national legislation with the WFD and other EU directives, and the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) principles, in the framework of their cooperation with the EU, EU Water Partnership, Eastern Partnership, or in national strategies/policies. The EPIRB project also foresees assistance to promote progress in this field. Some of the countries have already harmonized and aligned their national legislation with the EU WFD requirements and other EU directives, such as:

- Armenia (Armenia Water Code is harmonized with the WFD requirements and steps are being taken for the establishment of six national Water Basin Management Authorities)⁵;
- Moldova (new Water Law No. 272, entering into force in October, 2013, is partly aligned with the EU WFD and other EU Directives)⁶;
- Ukraine (the Law on Environmental Protection and the Water Code, the State Programme on Water Management development by 2020 reflects the principles and provisions of the EU WFD as well as the IWRM principles).⁷

In the other project countries the amendment and harmonization of the relevant legislations is planned and/or is already under development, such as:

- Georgia (new Water Act is currently under development, and aims to include IWRM approach and to reflect also the WFD requirements)⁸;
- Azerbaijan (harmonization of the national legislation with EU Directives is an important component of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU including the approximation of national legislation with the EU WFD. The National Indicative Programmes for the periods 2007–2010 and 2011–2014 have been identifying respective priority areas for cooperation and related objectives)⁹;
- Belarus (national legislation is not yet aligned with the IWRM and WFD principles but the amendment of the Water Code is planned according to the Water Strategy developed until 2020 and adopted in 2011.)¹⁰

In all countries efforts are also made for the implementation of the legal requirements however, only few have made progress in this regard. Country specific summaries of the status of harmonization with the WFD and implementation can be found in Part II of the current document

⁵ Draft Overview Report, Status of Country Implementation and Proposals for Support, prepared in January 2013 within the EPIRB Project Activity 1.2, Support to Country Implementation UNECE Water and Danube River Protection Conventions, page 16, 20-22.

⁶ As above, see pages 42-43

⁷ See 44-45, pages 49-50.

⁸ As above, see pages 34-36.

⁹ As above, see pages 26-27.

¹⁰ As above, pages 29,32- 32.

1.3. The relevant UNECE Conventions

Transparency of decision-making, public access to information and public participation in decision-making in environmental matters including water management are Aarhus Convention¹¹, the Helsinki Convention¹², and its Protocol on Water and Health¹³.

The Aarhus Convention grants rights for the public on access to information, public participation and access to justice and at the same time, puts obligations on the public authorities to provide access to environmental information upon request and by active dissemination, as well as to ensure public participation in decision-making on specific activities, programs, plans, policies and drafting legislation, as well as access to justice. The Convention outlines basic terms and conditions, basic principles as well as includes procedures how these obligations should be implemented. The Aarhus Convention's main requirements are summarized briefly in the Annex 2.

All project countries are parties to the Aarhus Convention as indicated below, have brought into compliance their national legislation with the Convention's requirements and have the obligation to implement them in practice.¹⁴

The **Helsinki Convention** in its Article 6 requires parties to provide for the widest exchange of information, as early as possible, on issues covered by the provisions of the Convention, and under Article 16, (on Public Information) information on the conditions of transboundary waters, measures taken or planned to be taken to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, and the effectiveness of those measures, have to be made available to the public. The information should include water-quality objectives, permits issued and the conditions required to be met as well as results of water and effluent sampling carried out for the purposes of monitoring and assessment, as well as results of checking compliance with the water-quality objectives or the permit conditions. The information has to be made available to the public at all reasonable times for inspection free of charge, and on payment of reasonable charges if copies are required. See more details in Annex 2.

The **Water and Health Protocol** was adopted one year after the Aarhus Convention and therefore its provisions are greatly harmonized with the requirements under the latter international instrument. The Protocol sets obligations for the parties on access to information and public participation in water and health related decision-making. Several of its articles deal with different aspects of how to carry out these obligations. See more details in Annex 2.

Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine have ratified the Helsinki Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health, and are obliged to implement its provisions. Although, Armenia and Georgia are not

¹¹ The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) was adopted on 25 June 1998 in Aarhus, Denmark, and entered into force on 30 October 2001. The Convention currently has 46 parties, including the European Union.

¹² The UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki Convention) was adopted on 17 March 1992 in Helsinki, Finland, and entered into force on 6 October 1996. The Convention has currently 39 parties, including the European Union.

¹³ The Protocol on Water and Health was adopted on 17 June 1999, in London, UK, and entered into force on 4 August 2005. The Protocol has currently 26 parties.

¹⁴ Moldova and Ukraine ratified the Aarhus Convention in 1999, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia in 2000, and Armenia in 2001. See: http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-13&chapter=27&lang=en

signatories or parties to the Helsinki Convention, but are signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health, they participate in several activities under these instruments and may consider ratification in the future. The EPIRB Project also offers assistance to some of the countries in this regard.

2. The Objectives and goals of the Communication Strategies for Pilot Basins

Following the objectives of the project as well as the project's overall Communication and Visibility Plan¹⁵, the Communication Strategies for the Pilot Basins should support first of all the project implementation, more concretely, the river basin management (RBM) planning and its implementation in the particular pilot basins.

Therefore the **overall goals** of the Communication Strategies for the Pilot Basins should include the following:

- to ensure proper communication, access to information, stakeholder and public involvement in the development and implementation of the RBMPs in the project countries in the pilot basins;
- to provide assistance to national governments on how to comply with their obligations, including practical support and guidance in addressing communication, access to information, stakeholder involvement and public participation in the development and implementation of RBMPs;
- to facilitate the establishment of effective structures and mechanisms for public participation that will continue operating beyond the project.

The **specific objectives** for the Communication Strategies include the following:

- to provide timely information to key stakeholders and the public in the specific phases of the project on the development and implementation of RBMPs, and particularly on the draft and final documents prepared (active provision of information and access to information including documents);
- to inform stakeholders and the public of the appropriate opportunities for public participation in the development and implementation of the RBMPs (consultation or active involvement), to facilitate/collect the input/comments of stakeholders on the draft documents and give them feedback on how these have been taken into account;
- to support the better communication of the project partners (project team and lead beneficiaries) with the key stakeholders at the pilot basin level;
- to assist in keeping the project partners, the key stakeholders and the public regularly informed of the project activities and results at the pilot basin level.

The **expected outputs and outcomes** of the Communication Strategies are as follows:

For the **overall goal**:

- Improved and more efficient communication, involvement of the stakeholders and the public in the development and implementation of RBMPs in the project countries at the pilot basin level;

¹⁵ See page 1 of this document.

- More effective and meaningful structures and mechanisms established for public participation in the development and implementation of RBM Plans in the project countries which will engage, build confidence and cooperation and promote the active participation and communication of diverse stakeholders in the planning and implementation of RBM Plans in the project countries in pilot basins, and which will continue beyond the project;
- Informed, improved and more transparent decision-making in the development and implementation of RBM Plans in the project countries at the pilot basin level, through communication, public participation and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

For the **specific objectives**:

- Communication among the project partners and with the key stakeholders at the basin level is improved and maintained;
- National governments comply with their obligations on access to information and stakeholder and public participation in the development and implementation of RBMPs;
- The key stakeholders and the public are informed in a timely manner in the specific phases of the project on the development and implementation of the RBMPs, particularly on the draft and final documents prepared;
- The stakeholders and the public are well informed of the appropriate opportunities for public participation (consultation or active involvement), which enables them to provide input/comments on the draft documents; feedback is given to them on how their input/comments have been taken into account ;
- Project partners, the key stakeholders and the public are regularly informed of the project activities and results at the pilot basin level.

2.1 The Stakeholders

The Communication Strategies need to reach out through various tools and means to the public and the key stakeholders so that they are properly informed and involved, and also to the key actors to enable them to carry out their role.

The WFD uses different terms for stakeholders (“public including water users”, “public”, “all interested users”) but these terms are not defined in the directive. The Aarhus Convention may give a guidance on who do we mean by the term “the public”¹⁶. The Convention also includes the term “the public concerned”¹⁷ which is a subset of the general “public”, and could correspond to the term “all interested users” as well as the above used more general term, “stakeholders”.

¹⁶ “The public” means one or more natural or legal persons, and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organizations or groups”. See Aarhus Convention, Definitions (Art. 2.4)

¹⁷ “The public concerned” means the public affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the environmental decision-making; for the purposes of this definition, non-governmental organizations promoting environmental protection and meeting any requirements under national law shall be deemed to have an interest. See Aarhus Convention, Definitions (Art. 2.5)

By “**stakeholders**”, we mean representatives of groups, institutions or individuals who have certain defined interest or “stake” in the decision-making process related to the development and implementation of the RBMPs, or they are or likely to be, directly or indirectly affected by the decisions related to the development and implementation of the RBMPs. These interests may be environmental, economic, social, cultural, recreational, religious, and geographical or others, legally or otherwise defined. In the broader sense, stakeholders may be also additionally defined as those having some influence on the outcome of the decision-making or some expertise, knowledge, experience, information or activities which may be useful for the decision-making process.

Special attention should be paid to those marginalized or disadvantaged groups who are affected or likely to be affected by the RBM planning and its implementation, but have no voice.

The stakeholder groups generally can be categorized broadly into various different groups. An illustration of stakeholder groups for the RBM planning and implementation is given as an example, in Annex 3.

For the Communication Strategy of the Pilot Basins, the most important stakeholders are ultimately the people living in the pilot basins, the general public and the different stakeholders who will be affected or likely to be affected and benefit from the development and implementation of RBMP.

The **key audience and stakeholders** who need to be addressed by the Communication Strategies in the pilot basins should include three basic target groups:

- The institutions/organizations responsible for water management in the beneficiary countries (including the national and the pilot basin level) called as the main target groups in the project;
- Specific other groups of stakeholders such as basin organizations (including Non-Governmental Organisations, NGOs and all other stakeholders such as water users, business, journalists, etc.) dealing with water management and RBM development in the beneficiary countries and in the pilot basins or being affected or likely to be affected by these;
- The general public who is the end-beneficiary of the project’s results living in these basins, and who will benefit from the improvement of the quality and quantity of water resources.

The stakeholders are to be identified specifically for the pilot basin. These key stakeholder groups will be the target groups for the Communication Strategy and should be regularly targeted with certain messages, informed, consulted and involved during the development of the RBMP and its implementation. These target groups are described specifically for the pilot basin in Part II, Chapter 4.1 and in the Annex 5. Methodological assistance for identification and involvement of the stakeholders are provided by several guidance materials.¹⁸

¹⁸ See for example: Guidance document n.8, Public Participation in relation to the Water Framework Directive; Aarhus Convention Recommendations on Public Participation in Decision-making in Environmental Matters; Harmonizing Collaborative Planning (HarmoniCOP) Learning Together to Manage Together

2.2 The Elements of the Communication Strategies for the Pilot River Basins

The Communication Strategies for the Pilot Basins taking into account the above goals and objectives should include the following elements:

- What are the obligations?
- Who will take action?
- Who will need to be informed, consulted and involved?
- What should be communicated and to whom?
- What are the channels and tools to deliver the information and messages?

These elements of the Communication Strategy are developed for each basin in the Part II and Part III of this document.

2.2.1 What are the obligations?

The minimum obligations or tasks regarding information provision, consultation and active involvement in the different phases of the RBM planning as prescribed by the WFD, the main guiding document for the project, the WFD, are as follows:

- **Information:**
 - Information should be provided regularly, and actively throughout the RBM planning and the project implementation (ensuring proper information for the public and stakeholders of the planned measures and on the progress of their implementation in order to enable their involvement).
 - In addition, access to background documents and information used for development of the draft river basin management plan should be provided on request.
 - All draft documents for information and consultation as soon as they are available, and documents after adoption, should be placed on the web sites.
- **Consultation** should be organized:
 - on the timetable and work programme for the production of RBM plan (including statements of the consultation measures),
 - the interim overview of significant water management issues (identified in the river basin), and
 - on the draft copies of river basin management plan (which need to be published and made available for commenting by the public including users).
- **Active involvement:**
 - of all interested parties, should be encouraged in particular in the production, review and updating of the RBMPs.

“Active involvement” which “shall be encouraged” means a more intensive form of public involvement than a one-time opportunity for consultation and submission of comments. It should be understood as an overarching process, consisting of various opportunities when the stakeholders can be involved in

different phases of the decision-making, are able to discuss the issues/problems, contribute to their solution throughout the entire planning process.¹⁹

“Active involvement” may be interpreted, for example, according to the requirements and approach of the Aarhus Convention’s second pillar under which opportunities are ensured for the public to participate throughout the decision-making from the early stage when options are still open, and participation can be effective and influence the outcome of the decision-making, until the end of the decision-making. One example which could be brought as illustration is, how NGOs and representatives of other stakeholders participate under the ICPDR as observers in the working groups, where they can make comments on all issues, draft documents, and can participate in discussions and can also contribute to the content of the documents or decisions. It could also include a participatory planning approach where the representatives of the stakeholders/public are engaged in the discussions in the different phases of planning process as partners, cooperate with the authorities, and have opportunities to shape the outcome of the decision-making. Ultimately, it could also include decision-making by consensus or shared decision-making.

Special attention should be given to the timeframe for the public participation activities according to the requirements of Art. 14 of the WFD, as mentioned on page 3 above and in Annex 1:

- A timetable and work programme for the production of the RBMP (including information of the planned consultation measures) should be publicly made available, at least three years before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers;
- An interim overview of significant water management issues identified in the river basin should be made available at least two years before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers
- Draft copies of river basin management plan should be made available, at least one year before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers.
- A six month timeframe for the public for the submission of written comments, in order to allow active involvement and consultation on the above documents.

After the consultation period is over, information and feedback needs to be given on what happened to the comments, how they have been taken into account and the new version of the document or draft document should be made publicly available and preferably, also sent directly to the key stakeholders (by e-mail list).

The RBMPs must also summarize the public participation measures and should evaluate their results and impact on the plan. (WFD, Annex VII). This should cover information on how the public involvement has been provided and include „the summary of public information and consultation measures taken, their results and the changes to the plan made as a consequence.”

During the implementation of the RBM Plans and the next cycle of RBM planning similar access to information and public participation requirements should be observed.

¹⁹ EU Guidance on Public Participation in relation to the Water Framework Directive, pages 17-18.

2.2.2 Who will take action?

Usually, the competent authorities that are in charge for the RBM planning and implementation in the pilot basin, are also responsible for the communication, provision of information, ensuring consultation and active involvement throughout the planning.

During the implementation of the EPIRB project, the REC will be responsible for the implementation of activities on communication, provision of information, as well as consultations and active involvement for the pilot basins. The REC team will carry out these tasks in cooperation with the Project team and the Lead Beneficiaries, in order to obtain the necessary information and ensure that the country and pilot basin conditions are taken into account.

After the end of project, the competent authorities will need to take over these responsibilities. These competent authorities are those national ministries, agencies and river basin authorities who are responsible for water management and one of them is designated as Lead Beneficiary Institutions, who are the main partners in the project for its implementation and also are the main beneficiaries. These competent authorities (lead beneficiaries) are listed in the Part II, Chapter 4 under each pilot basin's Communication Strategy.

2.2.3 Who will need to be informed, consulted and involved?

- As said above, information should be made accessible and available for all including the general public, all the time actively and upon request by the competent authorities in the pilot basin using the proposed channels below.
- For the consultation and the active involvement, the key stakeholders in the pilot basin should be identified who will need to be consulted and actively involved in the different phases of the project and the RBM planning.

These key stakeholders have been identified in the Communication Strategies for each pilot basin and are included in Part II, Chapter 4 and Annex 5 of this document.

The REC will organize nine consultations to comply with the requirements on the key points of decision-making in RBM planning and implementation when stakeholder involvement/public participation is required in form of consultation. These will include:

- two regional consultations for the key stakeholders of pilot basins (one for the three Caucasus countries and one for the three EE countries) on the significant water management issues during 2014;
- five consultations at the pilot basin levels on the draft RBMPs (2015); and
- two regional consultations for the key stakeholders of pilot basins (one for the three Caucasus countries and one for the three EE countries) on the implementation of the selected measures (from the Programme of Measures) and future of the RBMP (2015).

2.2.4 What should be communicated, when and to whom?

During the implementation of the project, the communication should target the identified specific stakeholders and the general public in the pilot basins.

The key stakeholder groups should be targeted in order to:

- be informed of the general and specific issues related to the planning and implementation of the RBMPs;
- make them aware of the current situation in the pilot basin, as well as of the planned activities and their possible impacts;
- mobilize them to get involved in the dialogue through the existing opportunities; and provide their input/comments in order to find solutions for the problems;
- make them understand what will be the impacts and the benefits of the integrated water management, RBMPs and the selected measures and what could be their role;
- how to change their behaviour to achieve a good status of water, etc.

General messages could be formulated to reach out to the whole basin, such as:

- Integrated river basin management approach: “Together getting the waters cleaner” / Integrated river basin management plans are key to achieving good status of waters;
- IRBM benefits all sectors;
- Water is everyone’s interest.

The key messages to the **stakeholder groups** should be formulated specifically for each pilot basin, and should be concentrated around the key milestones to be achieved in the project and in the RBM planning and implementation in the respective pilot basin, such as:

- significant water management issues, basin analysis reports;
- the draft RBMP and PoM;
- the approved RBMP and PoM;
- the implementation of selected measures and their impacts.

The specific messages for the stakeholder groups are identified in the Part II for each pilot basin.

The general public should receive communications, general information about the planned activities in the pilot basin, of the project implementation and its activities and results.

2.2.5 What are the channels and tools?

For communication and access to information of the planned activities in the pilot basin and of the project implementation, the public and the stakeholders will be targeted through the following tools:

- Up to date information, documents and draft documents will be placed regularly on the web site of the project as soon as they are ready and available, and on the specific micro websites for the pilot basins and on the web site of the competent authority;

- Newsletter “In the Flow” will be published regularly within the project (every 6 months) with information communicating the activities and results of the project overall and specifically in the pilot basins ;
- Links will be made with other relevant web sites (e.g. websites of relevant governmental, scientific institutions, NGOs, as well as with relevant project web sites;
- Articles will be published in local and national media, and information given through TV and radio channels;
- Direct e-mail lists will be used to reach key stakeholders;
- Social media such as Facebook, similar national social media will be used to promote the project results;
- Leaflets will be published within the project about its activities and results including in the pilot basins;
- Press releases will be published, related to events when important milestones are achieved in the project at the basin level (such as River Basin Analysis Report published, RBM Plan and Programme of Measures adopted, selected measures implemented and evaluated)
- Different events will be used related to the project or related to other projects, activities or events when information can be disseminated, or which can be used for public awareness raising, such as World Water Day, Danube Day, Black Sea Day, etc.

It should be also considered, which of the communication tools are effective regarding the individual target groups and the public in the pilot basin. For example, to reach out to the farmers or far away communities may not be possible by electronic communication tools, web site, e-mail, social media but by the traditional media channels (TV, radio) and printed information materials (publications, leaflets).

For public participation (consultation and active involvement):

Key stakeholders should be and will be informed of the public participation opportunities related to the development and implementation of the RBMP, and the activities, events planned in the project related to the pilot basins.

The notification of the public participation opportunities should include:

- The short description of the upcoming public participation opportunity (what is the subject of the decision-making about which the public participation is organized, what is the purpose of the public participation (e.g. feedback, comments, proposals, etc. should be provided)
- Who is the competent authority responsible for the decision-making and the public participation (contact person and address including e-mail , or phone, address of office)
- What is the timing of the decision-making and the public participation procedure: when does the public participation procedure start, and what is the timing of various stages (if relevant)
- What are the opportunities for the public to participate (for consultation: submission of comments in writing or online, or in a meeting; in case of active involvement: what are the ways that people can be involved: River Basin Councils (RBCs), working groups, meetings, consensus conferences, submission of written comments, etc.)

- The time and venue of any envisaged public consultations or hearing(s)
- Who is the competent or relevant public authority from which relevant information can be obtained and where this information can be accessed or has been deposited for examination by the public. That is:
 - The authority that can provide more information if asked and can answer questions;
 - Where all of the detailed information and documents can be examined;
- Who is the competent or relevant public authority or any other official body to which comments or questions can be submitted, and the time schedule for submitting comments or questions (meaning, up until when comments can be given and when they will finally be evaluated);
- An indication of what information is available that is relevant to the proposed decision-making (list of documents and other materials available for public review).

The notification about the opportunities for public participation will be made available on the web site of the project, and the specific micro-web site of the pilot basin in a visible, easily accessible place, and on the web site of the competent authority. It also will be sent to the key stakeholders via e-mail lists. According to the good practice, these lists should be open. Stakeholders can indicate their interest for being included and if the competent authority or project team accepts their request, should get automatically such notifications by e-mail.

It is important to know what are the existing bodies, structures, institutions in the pilot basins where these exist and are used currently or could be used for public participation in the future (e.g. RBCs, working groups, committees, etc.). These are also indicated in the Part II for each pilot basin.

In Part III it is indicated what public participation opportunities are proposed related to the different project activities in the pilot basins, when and who will be responsible for ensuring them.

Since the project timeline is rather short, immediately after the approval of the Communication Strategies and Communication Plans for the Pilot Basins, information and notification should be made available in the pilot basins on the timetable and work programme for the production of RBMP (including statements of the consultation measures), on the interim overview of significant water management issues (identified in the river basin), and on the draft copies of RBMP (which need to be published and made available for commenting by the public including users).

The WFD prescribes a six month timeframe for the public for the submission of written comments, in order to allow active involvement and consultation on the above documents. According to the planned timeline of the project activities, it will not be possible to comply with these requirements. As best, 3 months is proposed for the timeframe of the consultations as a possible timeframe.

2.3 Implementation and update of the Communication Strategies and Communication Plans

In order to coordinate better the implementation of the Communication Strategies and Plans in the pilot basins, a Communication Committee (CC) is suggested to be established consisting of the country water management experts (CWMs) and the Project Director or Team Leader PD/TL. The members of the Committee will be appointed for the period of the Communication Strategy and Plan (2013-2016). A

draft Terms of Reference is proposed for discussion and approval concerning the working mode of the CC (Annex 4).

The more concrete Communication Strategy for the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali basin pilot basin is shown below in Part II. Part III. includes the Communication Plan for the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali pilot basin describing the more precise specific tasks and actions, timetable, responsibilities related to each phases. In Chapter 7 a system of evaluation of the success to be achieved is proposed for the pilot basin. Based on this, during the project the implementation of the Communication Strategies and Plans in the pilot basins will be regularly (on a yearly basis) evaluated and updated by the Communication Committee.

PART II: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE CHOROKHI-ADJARISTSKALI PILOT BASIN

3. Short description of the situation in the pilot basin and identification of needs and challenges the strategy needs to consider

Chorokhi-Adjaristskali pilot basin geographically covers Georgian part of the Chorokhi trans-boundary basin, with the sub-basin of Adjaristskali, a major tributary of the river Chorokhi and some smaller watersheds draining into the Black Sea. This includes the area of Autonomous Republic of Ajara, historic part of Georgia. The largest city is Batumi. Guria region borders with the basin from the North, Samtskhe- Javakheti from the East and Turkey from the South. The rich surface water resources of the basin consist of the rivers Chorokhi, Machakhela, Adjaristskali, Skhalta, Chirukhistskali, Korolistskali, Chakvistskali, Kintrishi and Achkva.

The total population size of Ajara is 393.7 thousand people (as of January 1, 2012). The population is concentrated in the city of Batumi and 5 municipalities. With its population size, Ajara is currently the sixth largest region of Georgia (among 11) and its capital is ranked fourth among Georgian cities after Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Rustavi.

Economic activities in Ajara are mostly concentrated in Batumi, today mostly being developed predominantly as a tourist centre with strong bias towards gambling. Speaking in more general terms, Ajara today is one of the most rapidly developing regions of Georgia. According to the last available data, gross regional product in Ajara in 2010 amounted to approx. USD 773.6 ml. or 6.6% of Georgian GDP. This is the 4th largest regional product in Georgia after Tbilisi, Imereti, Racha-Lechhumi and Kvemo Svaneti and Kvemo Kartli regions

Disaggregation of Ajara regional product by types of activities clearly sets it aside from other Georgian regions. Here the share of all types of services is very high as compared to other types of activities, especially agriculture and industry. This is explained by the fact that the autonomy is purposefully developed as a service provider with a focus on the tourism sector.

The recently published “River Basin Analysis report in the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali pilot basin” highlights the hydromorphological pressures to water bodies as one of the pressures with significant impact on water bodies of the pilot basin:

- change in the sediment flow due to water abstractions for drinking, industrial and hydropower water uses;
- river flow fragmentation by dams/levees, bank erosion and changes in the river bed structure, and damaged water substrata due to hydropower, water regulation and/or extraction of sand and gravel

Agriculture is very weakly developed in the region thus, having practically no impact on surface and ground water bodies. To be noted that due to the lack of data the concentration of nutrients in the rivers of the pilot basin drained from agricultural lands cannot be estimated.

In the territory of the pilot basin there is only one wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), wastewater coming from small farms is a pressure which is difficult to quantify, as there are no water and soil quality controls carried out. Despite the operation of WWTP, still pollutes sea waters, as the wastewater treatment facilities are not fully operational and biological treatment mechanisms are not yet in place. Hence, it could be concluded that sewage poses moderate pressure on the coastal waters.²⁰

3.1 Legal requirements in force (national/international)²¹

The Constitution of Georgia establishes basic rules of environmental protection and natural resource use. The Law on Environmental Protection (1996) establishes the general legal framework and many sector-specific environmental laws have been enacted.

The Georgian Water Law dates back to 1997 and addresses exclusively surface water but not groundwater. Together with the Law on Licenses and Permits (2005) it determines the protection and management of water resources in Georgia. In 2010 a new draft Environment Code was finalized by the Georgian Ministry of Environment Protection – its enforcement will replace former environmental laws. Further, a new Water Act is currently being developed – aiming to include the philosophy of IWRM, and to reflect also the WFD requirements.

The key national competent authority/ministry in institutional charge regarding environmental issues and specifically with freshwater resources is the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MENRP). In 2012 the Ministry of Environment published the second National Environment Action Plan of Georgia (NEAP), which guides national and regional environmental management. It covers all environment related issues, targets and actions planned for the period 2012-2016, including among others also: (i) water resources and biodiversity and (ii) protected areas.

Georgia is also a party to the Aarhus Convention and is implementing its requirements. (See Part I.)

3.2 On-going and past activities to build on²²

As of today, no RBMPs are in place. However, several initiatives and projects have been implemented on IWRM in Georgia and the South Caucasus during the last years. The ones involving Georgia and that focus on transboundary IWRM include:

- Support to the European Union Water Initiative in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EUWI EECCA) (on-going, European Union);
- Joint River Management Programme on Monitoring and Assessment of Water Quality on Transboundary Rivers (EU/TACIS; 2002-2003).
- Transboundary River Management Phase III for the Kura River basin – Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan Transboundary river management for the Kura River; funded by the European Union; Duration: 01/2012 – 01/2013.

²⁰ See: EPIRB Project, River Basin Analysis in the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali pilot basin, Georgia

²¹ See: EPIRB Project Activity 1.2. Support to country Implementation UNECE Water and Danube River Protection Conventions report

²² See: EPIRB Project Activity 1.2. Support to country Implementation UNECE Water and Danube River Protection Conventions report

- Water Governance project. EU, 2008-2010.
- Reducing Trans-boundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras River Basin (2004-2007 – UNDP Sida)
- Reducing Transboundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras/Araks River Basin (2007-2010 – UNDP GEF)
- Reducing Transboundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras/Araks River Basin, Full Sized Project (2011 – 2014 – UNDP GEF)
- Project on implementation of the UNECE Water Convention and management of transboundary watercourses shared by Georgia and Azerbaijan (UNECE/OSCE/ENVSEC Initiative)
- Integrated Natural Resources Management in Watersheds of Georgia (on-going - USAID)
- Water Management in the South Caucasus (USAID, 2000-2004)
- South Caucasus Water Program (USAID, 2005-2008)
- Development of Environmental Monitoring and Management Systems (funded by the Finnish Government, 2006-2008)
- Transboundary Cooperation for Hazard Prevention in the Kura-river Basin (Federal Environmental Agency of Germany, 2003-2006)
- Science for Peace Program - South Caucasus River Monitoring (NATO/OSCE. 2002-2008)

4. The goals and objectives of the Communication Strategy for the Pilot Basin

The Communication Strategy for the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Pilot Basin will support first of all the project implementation, more concretely, the RBM planning in the pilot basin and its implementation.

The overall goals of the Communication Strategy for the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Pilot Basin are the following:

- to ensure proper communication, access to information, stakeholder and public involvement in the development and implementation of the RBMPs in the basin;
- to provide assistance to the government authorities in the basin on how to comply with their obligations, including practical support and guidance in addressing communication, access to information, stakeholder involvement and public participation in the development and implementation of RBM Plan;
- to facilitate the establishment of effective structures and mechanisms for public participation in the basin that will continue operating beyond the project.

The specific objectives for the Communication Strategy for the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Pilot Basin are the following:

- to provide timely information to the key stakeholders and the public in the basin in the specific phases of the project on the development and implementation of RBMP, and particularly on the draft and final documents prepared (active provision of information and access to information including documents);

- to inform stakeholders and the public of the appropriate opportunities for public participation in the development and implementation of the RBMP (consultation or active involvement), to facilitate/collect the input/comments of stakeholders on the draft documents and give them feedback on how these have been taken into account;
- to support the better communication of the project partners (project team and lead beneficiaries) with the key stakeholders at the pilot basin level;
- to assist in keeping the project partners, the key stakeholders and the public regularly informed of the project activities and results at the pilot basin level.

The expected outputs and outcomes of the Communication Strategy for the Pilot Basin will be as follows:

For the overall goal:

- Improved and more efficient communication, involvement of the stakeholders and the public in the development and implementation of RBMP in the pilot basin;
- More effective and meaningful structures and mechanisms established for public participation in the development and implementation of RBMP in the pilot basin which will engage, build confidence and cooperation and promote the active participation and communication of diverse stakeholders in the planning and implementation of RBMP in the pilot basin, and which will continue beyond the project;
- Informed, improved and more transparent decision-making in the development and implementation of RBMP in the pilot basin, through communication, public participation and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

For the specific objectives:

- Communication among the project partners and with the key stakeholders at the basin level is improved and maintained;
- National, regional and local governments comply with their obligations on access to information, stakeholder and public participation in the development and implementation of RBMP in the pilot basin;
- The key stakeholders and the public are informed in a timely manner in the specific phases of the project on the development and implementation of the RBM Plan, particularly on the draft and final documents prepared;
- The stakeholders and the public in the pilot basin are well informed of the appropriate opportunities for public participation (consultation or active involvement), which enables them to provide input/comments on the draft documents; feedback is given to them on how their input/comments have been taken into account;
- Project partners, the key stakeholders and the public at the pilot basin level are regularly informed of the project activities and results.

The Communication Strategy needs to reach out to the public and the key stakeholders in the pilot basin so that they are properly informed and involved, and to the key actors to enable them for carrying out

their role. The key stakeholders and actors, the tools and channels to inform them, involve them and reach out to them are analysed and proposed in the sections 4.1-4.3.

The implementation of the strategy is completed with a Communication Plan which will include the more concrete details how the strategy will be carried out, what activities will be taken, who will be responsible and when to carry these out. (See Part III.) During the EPIRB project, the REC together with the EPIRB Project Team will be responsible to carry out these tasks in cooperation with the Lead Beneficiaries in the country. After the project is over the competent authority at the basin level should take over these responsibilities and ensure their implementation for the following RBM planning cycles.

4.1 Key stakeholders to reach

There is a wide variety of stakeholders that have an interest or impact on the management of the pilot river basin and the rivers within the whole basin, such as the general public, people living in the pilot basin who are the end-beneficiary of the project's result, benefiting of the quality and quantity of water resources.

The main stakeholders are the: national, regional local line agencies/authorities in charge of different sectors, national planning agencies, other regional and national research institutions and international organisations with expertise in one or more sectors, NGOs dealing with water management/environmental issues, water users, and those which have or might have activities with potential impact on the water issues in the pilot basin, or which are affected or might be affected potentially by planned measures and activities .

Special attention should be paid to those marginalised or disadvantaged groups who are affected or likely to be affected but have no voice, both positively or negatively by RBM planning and its implementation.

The Communication Strategy will as much as possible try to address all stakeholders identified but some stakeholder groups based on the Analysis Report have been designated as key water related sectors. These sectoral stakeholders to be addressed are:

- **Hydropower:** Rivers of Ajara have high hydropower potential. Despite this fact main rivers in Ajara have been underutilized. Currently construction of several hydropower plant (HPP) is planned. Dams of the HPP planned to be constructed on the territory of Georgia will accumulate limited volume of solid sedimentation carried by the tributaries of the Chorokhi River (Ajariskhali and Machakela rivers) from the territory of Georgia, which again negatively affect the formation of Adlia-Batumi section of the beach.
- **Fisheries:** dozens of fish farms are operating in the pilot basin, the water outflows from the fish farms do not pose significant pressures on the water ecosystems.
- **Irrigated agriculture:** Ajara rivers are not used for irrigation, (due to high precipitation) irrigation systems are installed only in the Adjaristskali River basin (precipitation is relatively less). Leading sectors of agriculture in Ajara are represented by citrus and fruit growing, vegetable growing, animal husbandry. Other traditional and supporting sectors are represented by: viticulture, annual crop production, tea production, apiculture, tobacco growing, etc.

- **Tourism and recreation** (water related): Almost 44% of private investments were made in Ajara's tourism sector in 2011.
- **Water supply (domestic and industrial uses)**
- **Forestry:** Forests occupy 65% of the whole territory of Ajara, higher than the Georgian average – 39%
- **River works**

During the inception phase of the project the following main project counterparts were identified, who are also part of the main stakeholders and who have indicated already their commitment in the process:

- **Leading Beneficiary Institutions:**
 - Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MENRP)
- **Other Key Beneficiary Institutions/Agencies:** National Environmental Agency (NEA), under the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection:
 - Environmental Pollution Monitoring Department of NEA
 - Hydro-meteorology Department of NEA
 - Department of Geological Hazards Management of NEA

Taking in consideration the above mentioned issues a list of representatives of key stakeholders has been elaborated and proposed, and can be found in Annex 5.

4.2 Existing opportunities/structures to reach stakeholders and inform/involve them

There is no organization identified to implement full-fledged management of the pilot basin, we can still single out Directorate for Environment and Natural Resources of Ajara Autonomous Republic (DENR) and the Black Sea Monitoring Division (BSMD) of the National Environmental Agency (NEA) of Georgia which are responsible for environmental assessment and monitoring in the region.

As there are no RBCs developed yet, it is suggested that the public consultations to be done under the National Coordination Committees (NCCs) with the inclusion of relevant regional (for the respective basins) stakeholders (NGOs, business, representatives of the local authorities, regional representatives of the national institutions).²³

4.3 The best methods/channels of communication

According to a study from 2012, majority of Georgians considers TV as their most important news source. Watching TV being common way of spending free time, 40% of the population watches TV three or more hours a day. 76% of Georgian households have one set, 17% -two sets and 5% -three or more TV sets. Among the TV channels Rustavi 2, IMEDI TV and the Georgian Public Broadcaster are the most popular. Radio as a source of information remains relatively popular, while print media in general, local newspapers in particular, occupies a smaller position. Most local newspapers are published weekly. Internet usage increased in recent years, in 2011, 33% of the population stated that they have Internet

²³ Source: Annex 2.7. of the First Interim Report http://blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/downloads-section?term_node_tid_depth_i18n=31&field_country_tid_i18n=All&field_downloads_type_tid_i18n=All&title=

access at home.²⁴ The primary activity for internet users is social networking the number of Facebook users in December 2012 was 911,900, 19.9% penetration rate.²⁵

Taking in consideration the above mentioned issues and the resources available the general public should be informed of the planned activities in the pilot basin and of the project implementation through the following tools:

- **EPIRB project web site** (www.blacksea-riverbasins.net/, up to date information, documents and draft documents placed regularly on the specific web pages/ „microsites” for the pilot basins (<http://blacksea-riverbasins.net/en/pilot-river-basins>) and used also for public awareness activity;
- **website of the competent authority** (Ministry of Environmental Protection: <http://moe.gov.ge/>; National Environmental Agency: www.nea.gov.ge; Directorate for Environment and Natural Resources of Adjara Autonomous Republic: <http://garemo-adjara.gov.ge/>)
- **In the Flow** twice-yearly newsletter of the EPIRB project, including also specific information of the pilot basin activities;
- **EPIRB project leaflets**
- **links are made with other relevant web sites** (e.g. websites of relevant governmental, scientific institutions, NGOs, as well as with relevant project web sites;)
- **articles** published in local and national media, and information given through TV and radio channels; e.g.: Adjara TV, Channel-25, Radio Adjara, newspaper – Batumelebi, news blog - media.ge, Green Alternative web site
- **Press releases**
- **direct e-mail lists** used to reach key stakeholders; (CENN, Environmental Information and Education Centre , REC Caucasus, etc.)
- **social media** such as Facebook
- **different events** related to the project or related to other projects, activities or events when information can be disseminated, or which can be used for public awareness raising, outreach activities etc., such as World Water Day, Black Sea Day etc.
- **photos, videos** about the pilot basin (assets, risks, challenges, etc.)

4.4 Key message areas of the communication strategy

Effective communication requires consistent, clear messages confirmed by a variety of authorities. So there is a need to outline a base of key messages while expecting and allowing for variations for these. Messages to be addressed by the communication activities are:

- General:
 - Getting the pilot basin’s waters cleaner; River basin management approach: Single system of water management, River Basin Management, the natural geographical and hydrological unit -

²⁴ http://www.epfound.ge/files/media_report_final_eng_print_3.pdf

²⁵ <http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm#am>

instead of according to administrative or political boundaries; including integrated river basin management tools and planning;

- Interested and affected stakeholders should be encouraged to actively participate in water resources planning, development and management.
- Specific (these could address based on the identified pressures with significant impact):
 - Hydromorphological issues:

CAUSES: water abstractions for drinking, industrial and hydropower water uses; river flow fragmentation (dams/levees, bank erosion and changes in the river bed structure, and damaged water substrata due to hydropower, water regulation and/or extraction of sand and gravel)

IMPACTS:

 - Interruption of river and habitat continuity
 - Fragmentation of habitats and fish populations
 - Degradation of reproduction and biodiversity
 - Reduced nutrition for terrestrial species depending on the water ecosystems
 - Reduced coastal and benthic habitats, alteration of benthic organisms.

To be effective, communications need to be directed at specific audiences or groups of audiences and should be designed for clearly defined target groups: those whom the information is aimed at. These groups often overlap, but may be divided in categories. The below table includes the different messages to the different target groups including the best channels/tools for communication which are able to effectively deliver the identified key messages.

What?	To Whom?	How?
Integrated river basin management approach: “Together getting the waters cleaner” / Integrated river basin management plans are key to achieving good status of waters	All	Website, Newsletter, leaflet, media, different events, photos, videos
IRBM benefits all sectors	All	Website, Newsletter, leaflet, media, different events, photos, videos
Water is everyone’s interest	All	Website, Mass media, public events, Newsletter, photos
Hydromorphological issues (Ecological flow, Use water wisely)	Decision-makers, Water industry, Hydropower, Navigation, river works	Website, Newsletter, Articles, Professional information

As the Strategy is a “living document”, the specific messages will be regularly updated based on the outcomes/milestones of the project.

PART III: COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE CHOROKHI-ADJARISTSKALI PILOT BASIN

The Communication Plan of the Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Pilot Basin is based on the Pilot Basin’s “Communication Strategy”, previous chapter of the current document, but is more detailed and goes further beyond in the sense that it brings the strategic approach into practical activities ready for implementation in order to meet the objectives of the Communication Strategy.

The Communication Plan should follow the requirements including timeframe set by the WFD. However, despite the efforts, according to the timeline of the project activities it will not be possible to comply fully with these timeframe requirements.

5. Activities

EPIRB Project Milestones	Activity	Type	Responsible*	Tentative Timing
General				
During the Project	Communication and active information provision – access to all draft and final project documents on the project website’s microsite dedicated to pilot basins, as soon as they are available; publishing regularly materials on project activities and results for basin stakeholders	Information	REC (<i>coordinate, input</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance, publish information on the project website</i>)	From December 2013 on-wards
During the Project	Active involvement and consultation - involvement of representatives of key stakeholders groups	Consultation	REC (<i>coordinate, input</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance</i>)	From December 2013 on-wards
During the Project	Outreach activities (cooperation with interest groups, lead beneficiaries) World Water Day Black Sea day, etc.	Information	REC (<i>input /preparation of dissemination information</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>coordinate and team member participating to the events (case by case)</i>)	every year: 22 March 31 October

EPIRB Project Milestones	Activity	Type	Responsible*	Tentative Timing
Specific				
Pilot Basin CSs & CPs	Inform stakeholders about the draft CS & CP , encourage feedback	Information Consultation	REC (<i>coordinate, sending targeted mass-email</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance, publish information on the project website</i>)	- December, 2013 – February, 2014
	Publish the final CS & CP endorsed by the beneficiaries	Information	REC (<i>input</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>publish documents on the project website</i>)	January-May, 2014
	Inform stakeholders about the expected pilot basin and project activities, timetable for the development of the RBMP, including consultation opportunities	Information	REC (<i>coordinate, input</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance, publish relevant information on the project website</i>)	December, 2013 – January, 2014
Report on analysis of the baseline situation/preliminary classification of the water bodies (A. 2.3) & Preliminary PoM/Catalogue of Measures	Notification about the availability of the report and the upcoming Regional Stakeholder Conference	Information	REC (<i>coordinate, targeted mass-email, etc.</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance, publish information on the website</i>)	March-April, 2014
	Regional Stakeholder Conference (in Caucasus) to discuss the findings of the report as well as the preliminary PoM	Consultation Feedback on comments	REC (<i>coordinate, organize</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>input/assistance, logistics</i>)	June, 2014
	Publish information in the EPIRB project leaflet about SWMIs and / final classification of all water bodies	Information	REC (<i>coordinate</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>input</i>)	May-June, 2014
Selection of Measures	Publish information on the selected measures /online	Information	REC (<i>coordinate/input</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance, publish information on the project website</i>)	March, 2014
RBMP and PoM	Regular information to the public on the work status towards the PoMs	Information	REC (<i>coordinate, targeted mass-emails etc.</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance, publish information on the website</i>)	From 2014 onwards
	Publish the timetable and interim	Information	REC (<i>input</i>)	February-March,

EPIRB Project Milestones	Activity	Type	Responsible*	Tentative Timing
	overview of development of RBMP (including PoM)		EPIRB Team (<i>publish documents on the project website</i>)	2014
	Publish the draft RBMP , including the PoMs; encourage feedback	Consultation	REC (<i>coordinate</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>input/assistance, publish the documents on the project website</i>)	January-February, 2015
	Notification about the availability of the draft RBMP and consultation opportunities	Information	REC (<i>coordinate, targeted mass-email, etc.</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance, publish information on the website</i>)	January-February, 2015
	Chorokhi Pilot Basin Stakeholder Forum/Conference to discuss the draft RBMP (inclusive PoMs)	Consultation Feedback on comments	REC (<i>coordinate, organize</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>input/assistance, logistics</i>)	March-May, 2015
	Publish the draft final RBMP	Information	REC (<i>assistance</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>coordinate, publish the documents on the project website</i>)	June 2015
	Publish EPIRB project leaflet with summary of the final Chorokhi RBMP	Information	REC (<i>coordinate</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>input</i>)	October - November, 2015
Implementation of selected measures	Notification about the consultation opportunity on the implemented selected measures	Information	REC (<i>coordinate, targeted mass-email, etc.</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>assistance, publish information on the website</i>)	July-August, 2015
	Regional Stakeholder Conference (in Caucasus) to discuss the implementation of the selected measures and 'vision' of the RBMP	Consultation Feedback on comments	REC (<i>coordinate, organize</i>) EPIRB Team (<i>input/assistance, logistics</i>)	October-November, 2015

*The beneficiary countries expressed their commitment and support to the EPIRB project. Carrying out of the listed activities is foreseen in close cooperation with the lead beneficiaries.

6. Realization and financing of communication and public involvement activities

The implementation of the activities listed above will be fully financed through the EPIRB project funded by the European Union. The realisation of the activities, range and type of tools is highly depending on the available funds allocated for these. The communication tools will rely on existing tools ensured by the EPIRB project such as project website, publications in the *In the Flow* project Newsletter, collecting photos of the EPIRB project etc. Furthermore many of the public events/consultations will be timed to coincide with other activities/events in the project.

The activities will be carried out by the REC, EPIRB Project Team in cooperation with the lead beneficiaries. The activities will profile the beneficiaries as key role players in this process, highlighting their role in securing the support, in ensuring the success of the actions and their on-going responsibilities.

7. Monitoring, evaluation of success

Milestones	
Communication Strategy and Communication Plan for the pilot basin is developed and endorsed/adopted	Expected outcomes of the communication process/activity
	The key stakeholders in the pilot basin give comment on the draft CS and CP and endorse the finalized version. The public and the stakeholders are informed about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the draft and final CS and CP; • the expected pilot basin and project activities, timetable for the development of the RBMP, including consultation opportunities.
	Performance Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft CS and CP is circulated for comment among key stakeholders: • Comments are collected and taken into account in final version of CS and CP; • Final version is endorsed by representatives of NCCM and is disseminated via the project website. • Specific notice is prepared and made available for the public and stakeholders about the expected pilot basin and project activities, timetable for the development of the RBMP, including consultation opportunities.
Report on analysis of the baseline situation/preliminary classification of the water bodies (A. 2.3) & Preliminary PoM /	Expected outcomes of the communication process/activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public and stakeholders are informed of the Report on analysis of the baseline situation/preliminary classification of the water bodies. • The representatives of key stakeholders are aware of the report and provide feedback/comments on it. • The feedback/comments of key stakeholders are taken into account in the final version of the report, and the stakeholders are informed of this.
	Performance Indicators

Milestones	
Catalogue of Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification about the availability of the report and the consultation opportunities; • Successful organization of the Regional Stakeholder Conference with a working group on the pilot basin report. • The relevant stakeholders are invited and attending the Stakeholder Conference and provide comments. (Verification means: list of invitees and attendees; no. of participants, summary of comments, no. of comments) • Summary of comments provided. Feedback provided on how they have been taken into account. • Information published in the EPIRB Project leaflet for the basin and on the project website/micro site. • Specific messages are formulated and conveyed for the different actors and stakeholders via different channels.
Selection of Measures	Expected outcomes of the communication process/activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public and key stakeholders are informed and made aware of the selected measures and their planned implementation.
	Performance Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information published on the selected measures on the project website/ micro site and the website of competent authority and in the project newsletter. • Specific messages are formulated and conveyed for the different actors and stakeholders via different channels.
RBMP and PoM	Expected outcomes of the communication process/activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public and key stakeholders are regularly informed on the work status towards the PoMs. • The public and key stakeholders are informed and aware about the timetable and interim overview of the development of RBMP, including PoMs. • The public and the stakeholders are notified about the availability of the draft RBMP, including the PoMs and of the consultation opportunities and on the possible feedback; • The representatives of key stakeholders are aware and provide feedback/comments on the draft RBMP, including the PoMs, at the Pilot Basin Stakeholder Forum/Conference and/or via electronic means. • The comments of the representatives of key stakeholders are taken into account in the final version of the RBMP, and information is given on how this happened. • The public and the stakeholders are informed of the final RBMP, including PoMs and its content.
	Performance Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular information published on the work status towards the PoMs on the project website/ micro site, the web site of the competent authority and in the project newsletter; • Draft RBMP including PoM report made available on the project website/ micro site, the web site of the competent authority; • Notification published about the availability of the draft RBMP including PoM report and the consultation

Milestones	
	<p>opportunities on the project website/ micro site, the web site of the competent authority and in the project newsletter, etc.;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information published on the timetable and interim overview of development of RBMP (including PoM) on the project website/ micro site, the web site of the competent authority and in the project newsletter and via various channels; • Specific messages are formulated and conveyed for the different actors and stakeholders via different channels. • Successful organization of the Pilot Basin Stakeholder Forum on the draft RBMP, including PoMs. • The relevant stakeholders are invited and attending the Stakeholder Forum and provide comments. (Verification means: list of invitees and attendees; no. of participants, summary of comments, no. of comments) • Summary of comments provided. Feedback provided on how they have been taken into account. Information is prepared for inclusion in the Annex of the RBMP. • Final RBMP is published on the project web site/micro site and the web site of the competent authority. • Information is published in the EPIRB Project leaflet for the basin on the results of Stakeholder Forum and the draft and Final RBMP, and on the project website/micro site
Implementation of selected measures	Expected outcomes of the communication process/activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public and key stakeholders are regularly informed on the implementation of the selected measures. • The public and the stakeholders are notified about the opportunities for consultation on the selected measures.
	Performance Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification published on the consultation opportunities on the implemented selected measures on the project website/ micro site, the web site of the competent authority and in the project newsletter, etc.; • Successful organization of the Regional Stakeholder Conference. • The relevant stakeholders are invited and attending the Stakeholder Conference and provide comments. (Verification means: list of invitees and attendees; no. of participants, summary of comments, no. of comments) • Summary of comments provided. Feedback provided on how comments have been taken into account.

ANNEX 1: The Water Framework Directive (WFD) - Short summary of the provisions on access to information and public participation

In its Preamble the WFD states the basic objectives of the public involvement underlining that that “The success of the directive relies on close cooperation and coherent action of Community, Member State and local level as well as information, consultation and involvement of the public, including users.” (Preamble, provision 14) It also emphasizes that in order to ensure the participation of the public in the process of the establishment and updating of the RBM plans, “it is necessary to provide proper information of planned measures and to report on progress with their implementation with a view to the involvement of the general public before final decisions on the necessary measures are adopted.” (Preamble, provision 46)

The main obligations are described in Article 14 of WFD which requires that the Member State “encourage the active involvement of all interested parties, in particular in the production, review and updating of the river basin management plans.”

For each river basin district the states also need to ensure that they publish and make available for comments to the public, including users:

- A timetable and work programme for the production of plan including statements of the consultation measures (at least three years before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers)
- An interim overview of significant water management issues identified in the river basin (at least two years before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers)
- Draft copies of river basin management plan (at least one year before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers).

In addition, on request the access to background documents and information used for development of the draft river basin management plan should be provided.

The directive also sets a six month timeframe for the public for the submission of written comments, in order to allow active involvement and consultation.

Must cover the following elements:

- A summary of public information and consultation measures taken, their results and the changes to the plan made as a consequence
- Contact points and procedures for obtaining the background documentation and information referred to in Art. 14.1

The plan should summarize the public participation measures and should evaluate their results and impact on the plan.

ANNEX 2: UNECE Conventions

Summary of the main requirements of the Aarhus Convention

Access to environmental information:

- Environmental information should be given to anyone upon request, without an obligation to state any interest in the form requested;
- Environmental information has to be disclosed as soon as possible, but not later than one month following the request, in exceptional and justified cases the time limit for disclosure may be extended up to two months;
- Request for information may be refused only in clearly and precisely defined cases, and the public interest in the disclosure should be taken into account. Information relating to emissions into the environment should be always made public. (These conditions are listed in detail in Article 4 of the Aarhus Convention);
- Any charge for the provision of environmental information may not exceed a reasonable amount.
- Active access to information means that the holder of information (most frequently a public authority) actively releases environmental information without being requested to do so;
- Public authorities must possess and update environmental information which is relevant to their functions;
- This information has to be made actively and effectively accessible for the public, in transparent manner, in various forms (e.g. publicly accessible lists, registers or files, electronic databases, in form of publications such as state of the environment reports);
- Pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs) should be developed.

Public participation in environmental decision-making

- Appropriate public participation must be ensured in decision-making on permitting of certain installations and activities having significant environmental impacts, as well as in decision-making on plans, programmes, policies relating to the environment and during the drafting of legislation;
- The public/public concerned must be informed early in a decision-making procedure, and in an adequate, timely and effective manner, about the details of the process;
- Reasonable timeframes must be ensured, allowing sufficient time for the public to participate effectively;
- Opportunities for public participation should be made available early on, when all options are open and when participation can be effective;
- The public may submit any comments, information, analyses or opinions that it considers relevant to the proposed activity;
- In the decision, due account must be taken of the outcome of the public participation.

Access to justice in environmental matters

- When access to information rights are infringed, any person should have access to a review procedure in a court of law or another independent and impartial body established by law.
- Members of the concerned public who have sufficient interest or whose rights are impaired have access to a review procedure in a court of law or another independent and impartial body established by law. Any NGO promoting environmental protection and meeting any requirements under national law shall be deemed to have an interest.
- When national law relating to the environment is violated, members of the public have access to administrative or judicial procedures to challenge acts and omissions by private persons and public authorities (if where they meet the criteria, if any, laid down in its national law).

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki Convention) - Summary of main requirements for access to information and public participation

The Convention sets obligations for the parties:

- to provide for the widest exchange of information, as early as possible, on issues covered by the provisions of the Convention (Article 6, Exchange of Information)
- to establish joint bodies the task of which will be, inter alia(in Article 9.2, Bilateral and multilateral cooperation):
 - to establish warning and alarm procedures;
 - to serve as a forum for the exchange of information on existing and planned uses of water and related installations that are likely to cause transboundary impact;
 - to promote cooperation and exchange of information on the best available
 - technology (in accordance with the provisions of Article 13) as well as to encourage cooperation in scientific research programmes;
 - to participate in the implementation of environmental impact assessments relating to transboundary waters, in accordance with appropriate international regulations.
- to ensure that information on the conditions of transboundary waters, measures taken or planned to be taken to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, and the effectiveness of those measures, is made available to the public (Article 16, Public Information. For this purpose the following information should made available to the public:
 - a) Water-quality objectives;
 - b) Permits issued and the conditions required to be met;
 - c) Results of water and effluent sampling carried out for the purposes of monitoring and assessment, as well as results of checking compliance with the water-quality objectives or the permit conditions;

- d) Results of water and effluent sampling carried out for the purposes of monitoring and assessment, as well as results of checking compliance with the water-quality objectives or the permit conditions.
- to ensure that this information shall be available to the public at all reasonable times for inspection free of charge, and that shall provide members of the public with reasonable facilities for obtaining this information from the Riparian Parties, on payment of reasonable charges, copies of such information. (Article 16, Public Information)

The Water and Health Protocol - Summary of main requirements for access to information and public participation

The Protocol sets obligations for the parties:

- to provide for access to information and public participation in decision-making concerning water and health, to build public awareness of issues, to give the public the opportunity to express its concerns and to enable public authorities to take due account of such concerns. (Article 5),
- to supplement access to information and participation by appropriate access to judicial and administrative review of relevant decisions;
- to ensure appropriate practical and/or other provisions for public participation when national and/or local targets are developed or published for the standards and levels of performance that need to be achieved or maintained for a high level of protection against water-related disease, and when these targets are periodically revised, (Article 6);
- to ensure also appropriate practical and/or other provisions for public participation, when water-management plans in transboundary, national and/or local contexts is developed; (Article 6)
- the public participation should be carried out within a transparent and fair framework, and due account should be taken of the outcome of the public participation;
- to take steps for public awareness arising, education and training (Article 9);
- to make available to the public information held by public authorities is reasonably needed to inform public discussion of target setting, establishment, improvement or maintenance of surveillance and early-warning systems and contingency plans, the promotion of public awareness, education, training, research, development (Article 10);
- to make available in response to a request for other information relevant to the implementation of this Protocol within a reasonable time to the public, free of charge or on payment of reasonable charges if copies are required;
- to make information available not falling under the exemptions included in Article 10.4 taking into account the public interest served by disclosure and whether the information relates to emissions and discharges into the environment.

ANNEX 3: Categories of stakeholder groups

The stakeholder groups generally can be categorized broadly into the following groups:

Directly affected people are generally both individuals and groups of people at the local level who are affected or likely to be affected by the development and implementation of RBM planning activities both positively and negatively. The affected individuals and groups in the pilot river basins include member of communities near the river, teachers, students, public health care providers, workers, farmers, fishermen, people involved in tourism and recreation etc. , who depend on the river resources for their livelihoods. Minorities, poor people and women are also included in these groups because they tend to be most vulnerable in that they have the least political power to inform and access planning and decision-making processes.

Indirectly affected people are people that live nearby and/or use resources from the pilot basin areas. They may also include people who trade occasionally with directly affected peoples.

The **private sector** are generally project developers or investors both from the region and outside the region who are either directly investing in a project or activities or interested in investments that would become feasible or profitable if a project goes ahead. They are generally focused around the sectors of hydropower, agriculture, forestry, mining, tourism and recreation, navigation, construction, and should include representatives of water users (private entities in fields as above, or their associations), among others.

The **Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)** are groups working at local, national, transboundary and regional levels. NGOs can be divided into several different types including: development-oriented, advocacy, research, and non-profit associations. NGOs may carry out research, design and implement projects, advocacy to influence decision-making around water-related issues or issues which are or may be impacted by the development and implementation of RBM Plans. These groups come from a number of sectors such as environment, water, community development, education, awareness raising, social, humanitarian, and others. Some locally-based NGOs may be representatives of directly affected people and those operating on other levels may have *interests* in the development and implementation of the RBM Plans.

The **research, academic and scientific community** which conduct research on a range of environmental and social issues relevant to the development and implementation of the RBM Plans. They can provide a valuable resource of information for the RBM planning and implementation.

International or regional organizations, donors and ongoing projects funded by them consisting mainly of UN agencies, EU, OSCE and others, who are also a major stakeholder group that may have projects in the pilot basins. They may be regional stakeholders who can influence or play a significant role in regional and/or national water and different related resources policies and programmes. This may be through technical assistance to line agencies or through other inputs.

International Conventions covering in their scope activities which may directly or indirectly affect the pilot basins (if ratified by the country).

River Basin Organisations or River Basin Committees other similar structures where exist in a country, they can play an important role in sub-basin planning processes.

Governmental sectors and their representatives at different levels, - other than the competent authorities responsible for the RBM planning,- are also stakeholders who may have information, data, knowledge or activities having an effect or influence on the RBM planning. For example: regional government officials especially dealing with water and environment and their district or local units, covering water management/environmental issues, including impact areas, such as agriculture, industry, navigation, tourism, soil, climate change, nature protection, biodiversity, health, etc. including district water management officials, nature and biodiversity protection offices, nature parks, protected areas, emergency authorities, municipal government officials, municipal waste managers, health officials, etc.

Upstream or downstream countries, in case of the transboundary pilot basins, such as in the case of the Upper Dnieper River Belarus/Ukraine and in the case of the Prut River Moldova/Ukraine, should be also considered as stakeholders, and their representatives of government, NGO, and other stakeholders at national and pilot basin level should be informed and involved in the dialogue on RBM planning and implementation. They can provide important information or data for scientific studies as well as to enhance decision-making and may be affected directly or indirectly.

ANNEX 4: Term of Reference Communication Committee

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference for Implementation of Public Awareness Strategy a Communication Committee (CC) will be established for the Implementation of the Communication Strategies and Plans of the Pilot Basins. The Committee will work towards better communication and encouraging public involvement in the development and implementation of the RBMPs at the pilot basin level.

OBJECTIVE/MISSION:

Objective of the CC is to help to maximize the effectiveness in reaching the targets of the Communication Strategies and Plans at the pilot basin level. The CC will review communications before they are issued in order to ensure consistency in the messages as well as their relevance for the people in the respective basin. Furthermore the CC will lead the yearly evaluation and update process of the Communication Strategies and Plans.

COMPOSITION:

The CC shall consist of the CWMEs and the PD/TL. The members of the Committee will be appointed for the period of the Communication Strategy and Plan (2013-2016). The REC will support the work of the CC by providing Secretariat Services.

METHOD OF WORK:

The CC consultations will be conducted mainly through e-mail, telephone/Skype interactions and through meeting once per year during the Project Steering Committee Meeting.

ANNEX 5: List of Stakeholders Chorokhi-Adjaristskali pilot basin

Name	Organization	Position/Department	Type/Level	Other info
Ms Nino Sharashidze	Ministry of Environment Protection (MEP)	First Deputy Minister	National Authority	
Ms Marina Makarova	Ministry of Environment Protection (MEP)	Head of Water Resources Management Division	National Authority	
Ms Nino Tkhilava	Ministry of Environment Protection (MEP)	Head of Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations	National Authority	
Ms Marine Arabidze	National Environmental Agency, MEP	Head of Environmental Pollution Monitoring Department	National Authority	
Mr Ramaz Chitanava	National Environmental Agency, MEP	Head of Department of Hydrometeorology	National Authority	
Mr Merab Gaphrindashvili	National Environmental Agency, MEP	Deputy Head of Department of Geological Hazards & Geological Risk Management	National Authority	
Ms. Nino Gvazava	Environmental Information and Education Centre	Director	National Authority	
Mr. Levan Tavartkiladze	Environmental Information and Education Centre	Department of Environmental Information and public Participation	National Authority	

Name	Organization	Position/Department	Type/Level	Other info
Mr Vakhtang Tsuladze	Directorate for Environment and Natural Resources of Ajara Autonomous Republic (AR)	Head of Directorate for Environment and Natural Resources of Ajara	Local Authority	
Mr Nodar Koncelidze	Directorate for Environment and Natural Resources of Ajara Autonomous Republic (AR)	Advisor to the Head of Directorate for Environment and Natural Resources of Ajara AR	Local Authority	
Mr Tariel Tuskia	Directorate for Environment and Natural Resources of Ajara AR	Chief Hydro-geologist	Local Authority	
Mr Giorgi Komakhidze	National Environmental Agency, MEP	Head of the Black Sea Monitoring Division	National Authority-local	
Ms Irine Baramidze	National Environmental Agency, MEP	Head of the Black Sea Monitoring Division Laboratory	National Authority-local	
Mr Archil Guchmanidze	National Environmental Agency, MEP	Chief Specialist, the Black Sea Monitoring Division,	National Authority-local	
n.a	Ministry of Agriculture - Autonomous Republic of Adjara	n.a.	Local Authority	
Gocha Beridze	Agro Service Center	Director	National Authority-local	
Raul Abuladze	Department of Tourism and Resorts of Ajara Autonomous Republic	Deputy of the chairman of the department	Local Authority	

Name	Organization	Position/Department	Type/Level	Other info
n.a.	Adjaristsqali Georgia LLC	n.a.	Other	
n.a.	Ajara Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)	n.a.	Other	
Zurab Manvelidze	Adjara Sustainable Development Association (ASDA)	Chairman of the Board	NGO	
Ms Sophiko Akhobadze	REC Caucasus	Executive Director	NGO	
Ms Nino Chkhobadze	Greens Movement of Georgia	Executive Director	NGO	
Mr Giorgi Dzamukashvili	Global Water Partnership – Georgia	National Coordinator	NGO	
Mr Malkhaz Dzneladze	WWF Caucasus Programme		NGO	
Ms Manana Kochladze	Green Alternative		NGO	
Ms Nana Janashia	Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN)	Executive Director	NGO	
Mr Rezo Getiashvili	Independent Journalist	Independent Journalist	Media	
Ms Tinatin Mosiashvili	Independent Journalist	Independent Journalist	Media	