

Minutes of the Meeting

1st Annual Meeting of WG 3 Water Management Sub-Group Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA)










Date: 01 December 2010, Skopje, FYR of Macedonia

Place: Hotel Holiday Inn, Skopje

Time: 08:30 – 18:00

Participants:

Beneficiaries/WG 3 Coordinators

- | | |
|--|--|
|  | Ms. Dunja Barišić, <i>WG 3 Water Management Contact Person, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction</i> |
|  | Ms. Daniela Rendevska, <i>WG 3 Coordinator, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning</i> |
|  | Mr. Filip Ivanov, <i>Director of the Administration of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning</i> |
|  | Mr. Ilbert Mirta, <i>Head of Water Department</i> |
|  | Mr. Dejan Panovski, <i>Head of Unit for protection of Ohrid Lake</i> |
|  | Ms. Lindita Morina, <i>Water Department Unit, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning</i> |
|  | Ms. Ljiljana Veljković, <i>WG 3 Coordinator, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning</i> |
|  | Ms. Biljana Jezdic, <i>WG 3 Water Management contact person, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning</i> |
|  | Ms. Nermin Cicek, <i>WG 3 Water Management contact person, Ministry of Environment and Forestry</i> |
|  | Mr. Ahmet Yakut, <i>Head of Water Management Department, Ministry of Environment and Forestry</i> |

European Union

- Ms. Maria Brättemark, DG Environment, WFD Team, European Commission

Other initiatives

- Mr. Dragan Željko International Sava River Basin Commission
- Mr. Dimitris Faloutsos Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean (GWP-Med)

Environment Forum Project

- Mr. Duško Hristov Environment Forum representative

Project Team

- Ms. Daiva Semenienė Key expert 3 /WG 3 Water Management Sub-Group Leader
- Mr. Philip Mellen ST Expert / WG 3 Water Management

RENA Secretariat

- Mr. Ruza Radovic Project manager, Human Dynamics



Official welcoming and introduction

The meeting was opened by Ms. Brättemark by thanking all participants for coming to the first annual meeting of WG 3 Water Management sub-group.

Ms. Semenienė welcomed the participants, outlining in brief the main elements of the agenda, including the involvement of other initiatives, cooperation with Environment Forum project and work plan of WG3 Water Management sub-group and inviting the participants to briefly introduce themselves.

Approval of the agenda

The proposed agenda was approved by the participants.

Water Framework Directive and related acts (Maria Brättemark)

Ms. Brättemark presented in more details requirements of the major water sector EU directives.

European Water Policy includes not only WFD but also other directives and other related acts. Water management is complex issue and there we are facing with diversity of uses, aspirations, pressures and impacts, as well as with the diversity of river basins in Europe. Therefore WFD is a framework directive and not “one size fits all” directive. WFD puts into legal frame the river basin concept, focusing on protection of all surface and water bodies, including transitional waters and coastal waters; covering all pressures and impacts on waters and providing for water management at river basin level. Main objectives that the EU is trying to achieve until 2015 are good ecological, chemical and quantitative status and no deterioration. Key elements for achieving this are that WFD objectives and programme of measures to achieve the objectives are included in the river basin management plans. This means that objectives are set per water body, as well as possible use of exemptions, by water body and the measures in the programme of measures shall be applicable at the latest end 2012. The Commission therefore expects the information provided in RBMP to be detailed at that level of the water body, and the measures included are specific enough and made operational at the latest 2012 in order for the objectives to be reached in 2015. Protected areas and their additional objectives have to be explicitly identified in the river basin management plans. Exemptions are allowed and can be granted as: the extension of the deadline (good status must be achieved by 2021 or 2027); the achievement of less stringent objectives under certain conditions; the temporary deterioration of the status in case of natural causes or “force majeure” – severe floods, prolonged droughts, accidents; new projects/modifications to the physical characteristics of a surface water body or alterations to the level of bodies of groundwater, or failure to prevent status deterioration of a body of surface water. Since climate change is one of the most important topic nowadays, in 2009 EU water directors have adopted guidance document on river basin management in climate change conditions. Another important aspect of WFD is public participation and Member States are obliged to encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the implementation of WFD, in particular in the production, review and updating of the river basin management plans. Current status of implementation shows that 17 countries have finalised and adopted their river basin management plans, 5 countries have finalised but awaiting the adoptions, the others are still in process of finalisation.

Other directives that are either closely coordinated with the WFD or represents the integral part of WFD are the following:

Environmental Quality Standards Directive (EQSD) sets standards and principles for achieving good chemical status for surface waters.

Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive protect the environment from the effects of urban waste water discharges & discharges from waste water from certain industrial (agro-food) sectors.

Bathing Water Directive aims at protecting public health and the environment by keeping our coastal and inland bathing waters free from pollution.

Drinking Water Directive sets standards for the most common substances (so-called parameters) that can be found in drinking water. In the DWD a total of 48 microbiological and chemical parameters must be monitored and tested regularly.

Nitrates Directive aims to protect water quality across Europe by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources polluting ground and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices.

Floods Directive (FD) is one more framework directive and at the same time sister directive of WFD. FD defines assessment and management of flood risks, requiring from Member States to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and



to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk. This Directive also reinforces the rights of the public to access this information and to have a say in the planning process.

Drin Dialogue (Dimitris Faloutsos)

Mr. Faloutsos presented Drin Dialogue as a process for transboundary cooperation and sustainable management for the extended Drin River Basin, as well as potential synergies with RENA. Drin Dialogue covers Prespa, Skadar and Ohrid Lakes. The Policy Framework for Drin Dialogue is provided inter alia by the: UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE Water Convention), EU Water Framework Directive and Petersberg Phase II Process / Athens Declaration Process (jointly coordinated by Germany, Greece and the World Bank - with the active participation of key regional organizations and bodies including UNECE, UNDP, UNESCO, GEF etc). The aim of the Drin Dialogue process is to explore ways towards the enhancement of transboundary cooperation and sustainable management for the extended Drin River Basin in compliance with the provisions of the UNECE Water Convention and the EU WFD and other related Multi-lateral Agreements. The main objective is to develop Strategic Shared Vision among the competent national authorities and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Drin basin. Main activities under Drin Dialogue are divided into four groups: (1) Situation analysis; (2) Drin Core Group Meetings; (3) National Consultation Meetings; (4) Consultation meeting at the Drin Basin Level. Next step for Drin Dialogue process is that UNDP together with all the partners has already initiated the development of project proposal for the new GEF International waters project for the Drin basin. This draft Project Identification Form (PIF) was discussed in the Drin Core Group (3/11/2010) and is planned to be submitted for approval to the GEF in early 2011.

Potential synergy with RENA Water Management WG lays in the selection of Drin basin site (Prespa, Skadar, Ohrid) as one of the cross border pilot sites to be used by RENA. Benefits of this selection are automatic focus on a range of potential geographical areas within RENA prioritization (Shkoder/Skadar, Ohrid, Prespa) + Buna/Bojana; synergies with an on-going process; facilitation of future activities that will follow up the Drin Dialogue and facilitation of EU WFD implementation on national and regional level.

Potential synergy exists also with the GEF IWLEARN project that will start in 2011. The objective of the new project is to enable cross-fertilization, among GEF projects and other related initiatives and the involved institutions and stakeholders at the regional, basin and national levels in each of the sub-regions that it will focus on; to strengthen existing communities and/or facilitate the creation of new as appropriate; to facilitate the initiation of basin-wide dialogues aiming at enhancing cooperation among stakeholders and countries and to support, through the aforementioned, the aims and objectives of the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and other key regional policy processes like MED EUWI, UNECE Water Convention, etc. Previous phase of this project that lasted for three years was focusing on the activities similar to those under RENA, but financed by UN funds.

Sava River Basin (Dragan Željko)

Mr. Željko presented main elements of the Sava River Basin. Framework agreement on the Sava RB was signed in 2002, at Kranjska Gora (Slovenia). This was followed by a remarkable amount of work done by the Interim Sava Commission – temporary joint body established at the Conference of the Interested Parties of the Sava Basin Initiative, held on March 12, 2003, in organization of the Director SP Working Table II at Brussels. The Interim Sava Commission was formed to prepare all steps necessary for the establishment of the permanent Commission upon entry of the FASRB into force. In the years which followed, all Parties ratified the FASRB, so it entered into force on December 29, 2004. The First Constitutional Session of the Sava Commission was held on June 27, 2005. The permanent Secretariat of the Sava Commission started to work on January 09, 2006. The International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) has been established for purpose of the implementation of the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB), namely the provision of cooperation of the Parties to the FASRB, for realization of the following goals: (1) Establishment of an international regime of navigation on the Sava River and its navigable tributaries, which includes provision of conditions for safe navigation on the Sava River and its tributaries, (2) Establishment of sustainable water management, which includes cooperation on management of the Sava River Basin water resources in a sustainable manner, including integrated management of surface and ground water resources and (3) Undertaking the measures to prevent or limit hazards, such as floods, ice, droughts and accidents involving substances hazardous to water, and to reduce or eliminate related adverse consequences. Activities of SRB Commission are focused on development of joint / integrated plans for the Sava RB; establishment of integrated systems for the Sava RB; preparation and realization of projects and creation of additional protocols to the FASRB. SRB management plan has been developed in accordance with the EU WFD and in coordination with the ICPDR efforts. The purpose of SRB



management plan is to improve integrated water management of the Sava river basin following the approach of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and thereby bring about improved water quality and a reduction of pollution and structural degradation as well as enhance cooperation mechanisms between the countries of the Sava basin in the areas of water protection, flood risk management and sustainable navigation. Other activities and achievements of SRB include flood action plan; hydrologic and hydraulic model for the Sava (USACE); development of integrated systems; hydrological yearbook for the Sava RB and new Sava hydrological study.

Danish experience in the development of RBMPs (Philip Mellen)

Mr. Mellen presented the experience of the RBMP development and EU WFD implementation in Denmark. Main pressures are coming from agricultural land use (loss of nutrients from arable land, nitrate loading – overexploitation – pesticide use) and pig farms. After 20 years of efforts the country has developed three WMPs ('87, '98, '04) and three Pesticide Action Plans ('86, '00, '03). The main objective is to achieve the “good status” by 2015 as per EU requirements. When it comes to the strategy for development of RBMPs the political agreement on activities and the financial framework is necessary while implementation of EU WFD is done in close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture. RBMPs are more than frameworks because they include the concrete measures and are followed by numerous local action plans developed by municipalities to be further implemented by the municipalities and other stakeholders.

NGOs perspective on water management (Duško Hristov)

Mr. Hristov gave a brief overview of Environment Forum project and established relations with RENA. Based on the EC Progress Report for FYR of Macedonia he also stated that in the area of water management no significant progress has been achieved. Implementation of the water law was postponed for one year and some progress was made in the area of water monitoring. The main issues are the lack of administrative capacity and lack of clear division of responsibilities. The situation is more or less the same in other RENA countries. When it comes to the NGOs perspective on the water management issue, on the recently held meeting in Ohrid, the conclusion was made that the main issues influencing the work of NGOs in this area are lack of administrative capacities, lack of adequate human resources, lack of funds, lack of coordination between national and local NGOs, limited access to data on environment issues. When it comes to access to data, in general Ministry of Environment of FYR of Macedonia provides lots of data on the environmental issues, but the data on water and water management are not under the responsibility of this Ministry, therefore it is much harder to get them.

Transboundary management of the Lake Ohrid/Prespa Watershed (Dejan Panovski)

Mr. Panovski presented the experience FYR of Macedonia has with transboundary management of the Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa Watershed. The beginning of cooperation was difficult since no communication whatsoever existed between FYR of Macedonia and Albania. At first cooperation was established on local level between two countries, being focused on nature protection of the shared site and after three years period, two Governments in June 2004 signed Agreement on protection and sustainable development of Lake Ohrid watershed. This was followed by the establishment of Lake Ohrid watershed Committee and Lake Ohrid watershed Secretariat. Similar initiative was implemented in February 2010, signing three lateral agreement (between FYR of Macedonia, Albania and Greece, with EC as one of the party of the agreement), on joint protection of Prespa Lake.

General objectives of Ohrid agreement are (1) protection of biodiversity especially protection of endemic species, (2) sustainable use of natural resources in the watershed, (3) control over economic activities which can cause negative impact in the watershed. Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee is responsible for integral management and protection of the biodiversity, distribution of information and raising public awareness. It is important that central government but also representatives of local self government and NGOs are members of the committee. The responsibilities of Lake Ohrid Secretariat are collection of data, preparation of studies, analysis and projects and public awareness activities along with supporting the Committee in meetings preparation. Due to the lack of communication between two countries no regular water monitoring was established. This was solved by signing two joint protocols for joint sampling and analysis, followed up by preparation of joint State of Environment report for Lake Ohrid watershed and continuous joint learning process implemented through trainings, study tours, workshops. The critical issue on the Prespa side is fisheries management and that is sector where joint agreement still does not exist. Next steps to be taken in order to improve the situation in this sector are harmonization of the Fishery Laws, implementation of international convention's provisions, preparation of the list of endangered species and creation of joint projects and joint Commission on this issue. Lessons learned during establishment of Ohrid Lake cooperation will be used during the process of establishment of joint cooperation on the Prespa Lake.



RENA Secretariat - Role and function (Ruza Radovic)

Ms. Radovic presented the roles and functions of RENA Secretariat including the rules for utilisation of the Incidental Expenditures in line with the project ToR.

RENA and Water Management Sub-group work plan – Daiva Semenienė

Ms. Semenienė presented the established structure of RENA and the overview of RENA implementation status. The objectives and activities planned under Water Management sub-group were presented in more details, divided to five tasks:

1. Creation of the sub-group and organisation of annual meetings;
2. Finalisation of needs assessment;
3. Preparation of capacity building programme – several topics defined, along with several cross border sites:

Potential training topics

- ✓ River Basin District characterisation
- ✓ Coordination of criteria for good water status
- ✓ Modelling of environmental impact of human activities on water bodies
- ✓ Monitoring of surface water status, groundwater status and protected areas
- ✓ Preparation of Programme of measures
- ✓ Measures related to Article 9 (cost recovery)
- ✓ Economic analysis in accordance with the WFD
- ✓ Link between WFD and Marine Strategy directive

Potential pilot sites

- ✓ Shkodra lake pilot site for WFD
- ✓ Prespa lake pilot for WFD
- ✓ Ohrid lake pilot for WFD
- ✓ Dojran lake pilot for WFD
- ✓ Neretva river pilot site for WFD
- ✓ Adriatic Sea as a pilot for WFD (coastal zone) and Marine Strategy directive.
- ✓ Sava river potential use for navigation (for water management and EIA)

It was agreed that RENA will be flexible and, if required be able to include new topics in the capacity building programme. Therefore the reserve list of training topics was made. The list is based on the initially proposed training topics and those additionally proposed during the meeting. The reserve list of topics includes:

- ✓ Economic analysis in accordance with the WFD, including Measures related to Article 9 (cost recovery) and cost-effectiveness considerations.
- ✓ WFD and Marine Strategy directive – where to make a line?
- ✓ Pressure and impact analysis related to other water sector directives.
- ✓ Exchange of experiences and information with other countries (Member States) how they justified derogations for reaching GES in their RBMPs.
- ✓ Training on pollution reduction programmes.
- ✓ Training on Floods directive implementation and its synergies with the WFD.

Some of the above topics are already partially included in the training programme.

4. Implementation of capacity building programme.

Based on the proposals identified above, the following workshops and pilot sites were selected during the meeting, along with identified timeframe for the first two workshops:

Workshop	Selected pilot site and the preliminary date of the workshop
Basic measures: the role of Water Framework Directive	March 2011/Turkey (3 days)
River Basin District characterisation, including economic analysis	Drin/May 2011/Albania (Tirana) (back to back meeting with Drin Dialogue consultation meeting)
Heavily modified water bodies and new modifications	Drina
Coordination of criteria for good water status and modelling of environmental impact of human activities on water bodies	Drin



Workshop	Selected pilot site and the preliminary date of the workshop
Development of the Programme of Measures and measures related to Article 9 (cost recovery)	Drina (workshop combined with the WG sub-group on Investment Planning)
WFD implementation exemptions and PP, stakeholders involvement.	Neretva

5. Assessment of further capacity building needs.

As discussed before, it was confirmed that for selected Drin cross border site, the trainings will be prepared in close cooperation with Drin Dialogue process while for Drina cross border site the collaboration will be established with Sava River Basin Commission.

Ms. Brättemark added that in relation to the training plan EC would like to see more details, as well as more description on the related initiatives and possible synergies with RENA. She also emphasised that the cooperation of the local community at the proposed sites has to be ensured prior to the start of the trainings.

Closure of the meeting

The follow-up points resulting from the meeting are:

Follow-up points	By whom	Deadline
Finalisation of the work plan to be done in accordance with the lines agreed during the meeting	RENA project team	December 2010

