



National Integrated Water Resources Management Dialogues

Experience from Central and Eastern
Europe

National IWRM Policy Dialogues

Experience from Central and Eastern Europe

Edited by Richard Müller

Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe

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List of abbreviations

AMCOW:	African Ministers Council on Water
AWP:	Area Water Partnership
CEE:	Central and Eastern Europe
CP:	Consulting Partner
CSD:	Commission for Sustainable Development
CWP:	Country Water Partnerships
EC:	European Commission
FFA:	Framework for Action
GWP:	Global Water Partnership
GWP CEE:	Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe
GWPO	Global Water Partnership Organisation
ICLEI:	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
ICPDR:	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
IWRM:	Integrated Water Resources Management
MESD:	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Romania
NGO:	Non governmental organisation
RBO:	River basin organisation
SIDA:	Swedish International Development Agency
SIWI:	Swedish International Water Institute
TEC:	Technical Committee
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
WFD:	Water Framework Directive

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Introduction

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, the international community called on countries to prepare Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and Water Efficiency Plans by 2005. Since then, the Global Water Partnership (GWP) has offered substantial support to countries that are trying to meet that call. One of the ways is to bring stakeholders together to discuss more integrated approaches to water management – a central role of the GWP.

Since its establishment in 1996, GWP has organised several thematic dialogues on global, regional and national and local levels. The results were synthesised and presented at World Water Forums in The Hague and Kyoto in 2000 and 2003 respectively. National IWRM Dialogues are building on success of previous dialogues and more importantly, they add a strong partnership element as they were initiated by Water Partnerships and GWP Consulting Partners.

The presented publication summarises experiences from National IWRM Dialogues in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine, which were held in late 2006 and early 2007.

In addition, the publication provides comprehensive information on results and outcomes of the dialogue initiative. It also gives an overview of most important water management issues including water governance, water pricing, river basin planning and others.

Importantly, the book is well timed to contribute to reporting on progress of IWRM Plans and Water Efficiency Plans at the 16th session of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-16), when we have a unique opportunity to raise awareness and galvanize political will.

Dialogues – a central GWP activity

To fulfil its mission to support countries in the sustainable management of their water resources, GWP has used dialogues – facilitated conversations among groups with often disparate views – to discuss complex and contentious water management issues. Such dialogues engage and inform people about how IWRM approaches can improve water management. They raise awareness, promote agreements and effect policy change. As GWP’s 10th Anniversary Book, *The Boldness of Small Steps*, notes:

“GWP partnerships were created to start conversations between people who are from different sectors, organizations and traditions yet are united by a concern about how to develop, manage and share their increasingly scarce supplies of water.”

Dialogues go by many different names – conversations, workshops, fora, and multi-stakeholder consultations or platforms. For GWP, a “dialogue” generally means a time-bound meeting, most often of one or two days, which results in awareness raised, linkages established among stakeholders and/or agreements reached between stakeholders. Sometimes, however, the term refers to a longer consultative process, such as a thematic dialogue. GWP has supported global and regional thematic dialogues and, most recently, national dialogues, which are this study’s focus.

Global and Regional Thematic Dialogues

GWP has invested substantial resources in several past thematic dialogues. Some of these thematic dialogues warrant a brief discussion here because they provide an institutional context for the National Dialogues Initiative and demonstrate that GWP has a history of supporting this kind of activity. Unlike the National Dialogues Initiative however, GWP pursued these past dialogues with other institutions. In addition, they had a strong thematic foundation and were supported by technical materials.

Dialogue on Effective Water Governance 2002 – 2003

One important thematic dialogue was the Dialogue on Effective Water Governance, which was built on the Framework for Action (FFA) that GWP presented at the 2nd World Water Forum in The Hague.

The FFA’s central message was the need for more effective water governance to solve the water crisis. Partnering with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), GWP brought the FFA’s message to the regional and country levels through the Dialogue on Effective Water Governance.

The Dialogue took place in 2002 and early 2003 in 36 countries, and was accepted as a Type 2 Partnership at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Every GWP region held a dialogue. Some regions held local sessions, while others held regional dialogues on the margins of the July 2002 GWP Consultative Partners meeting in Ghana.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the dialogue was designed to be as broad based as possible and constructed through country and regional workshops and roundtables that brought together parliamentarians, government agencies, key water practitioners, community groups, NGOs, UN agencies, donors, the private sector and others.

A report on the Dialogue “Effective Water Governance: Learning from the Dialogues,” which was circulated at the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, provides a good overview of the topics discussed during the Dialogues. It does not, however, offer much in the way of evaluative comments or impacts beyond the actual topics discussed in the course of the Dialogues. Still, two lessons can be gleaned from its final section. First, the best dialogues were specific in theme and place; if the audience was too diverse, it was difficult to focus. Second, since water governance was a new topic, the preparation of a concept paper was appreciated as a beginning to frame the discussions.

The Dialogue on Effective Water Governance was generally mainstreamed and was followed up in the regions with some specific activities. In East and West Africa, for example, the European Commission funded the development of a water governance scorecard, which GWP regions use. In addition, UNDP and Swedish International Water Institute (SIWI) received funding from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to set up the Water Governance Facility to which GWP has linkages. GWP Technical Committee (TEC) also contributed its Background Paper No. 7 “Effective Water Governance”. Although there was no general follow up, there were many different spin-offs.

Regional Dialogues on Financing Water

In Central and Eastern Europe, a regional report from series of national and regional dialogues was prepared in 2003. It seeks clarification of the mechanism of financing of many water undertakings. Correct understanding of the roles played by all individual financial flows enabled a discussion concerning an evolution of the present financing system into the one where increasing requirements binding the water economy would be met.

GWP organised follow up regional dialogues on financing in 2007. Support and advice was provided to the GWP regional water partnerships on specific substantive matters related to financing water. Financing Dialogues were organised in Eastern Africa (in Nairobi) and West Africa (in Ouagadougou) and a third workshop is planned for Central Asia in 2008. The meetings included officials from finance and water ministries, civil society and experts. The Nairobi meeting included a ministerial session linked to the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) and five ministers from East African countries attended. The Dialogues were successful and many participants appreciated the opportunity for interaction between ministry of finance and ministry of water officials. Follow up is being pursued at country level in Benin and Ghana. AMCOW later adopted a statement issued after the Nairobi meeting. A background paper on water financing and governance is being prepared by secretariat staff and TEC. The

Financing Water Dialogues are an on-going GWP activity.

Regional Dialogue on Water, Food and the Environment

The second phase of the Water, Food and the Environment dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe was organised between September 2003 and February 2004. Aim of the dialogue was to discuss problems associated with implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, to indicate possibilities and measures of its dissemination in rural areas, to combat organisational obstacles and, particularly, to stimulate contacts and cooperation between specialists of water management, agriculture and environmental protection.

The Water Framework Directive strongly emphasises the need for protection of water resources and requires the achievement of good ecological status of waters. The idea of the Dialogue on the other hand, under the title “Water-Food-Environment” is aimed at providing sustainable development of rural areas.

Water for the 21st Century: Vision to Action in Central and Eastern Europe

Principal stakeholders in the region were consulted during preparation of the Vision to Action. “Water for the 21st Century: Vision to Action in Central and Eastern Europe” document was prepared for presentation at the Second World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference held in The Hague, the Netherlands in March 2000. The Vision was prepared under the guidance of the World Water Commission on Water for the 21st Century – an initiative of the World Water Council.

The Vision to Action process was designed to be as broad based as possible. Consequently, the building blocks for the development of the Vision and Action were constructed through consultations with the principal stakeholders in the major regions of the world. Through regional meetings and workshops this consultation process brought many experts together – government agencies, key water

practitioners, UN agencies, donors, the private sector, and others – to establish a shared view of appropriate strategies, mechanisms for implementation, and priorities for immediate action and investment.

These initiatives clearly demonstrate that GWP uses dialogues as a principal tool to promote IWRM approaches at the global, regional, and recently at the national level with the National Dialogue Initiative.

Immediate predecessors of the National Dialogues Initiative

The National Dialogues Initiative has two immediate predecessor processes. One was GWP's second informal IWRM survey. Another was the first-ever global meeting of Country Water Partnerships, which took place in August 2006, just before GWP's 10th Anniversary celebrations, and the Consulting Partners Meeting.

The second informal IWRM survey

Following up on the first baseline survey (in 2004), the second informal IWRM Survey was released in March 2006 at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico. Like the baseline survey, the second informal survey reported on the status of the 2005 WSSD target on national IWRM and water efficiency plans. It was also designed to target support and funding to advance IWRM planning. As the Preface states: *"In addition to monitoring progress on meeting the target, the survey should provide a yardstick to governments and donors to assess where and how to target their support to ensure that those countries presently not on track will be supported in the planning process and those who have responded to the target will get support in turning their plans into actions."*

The survey's results were troubling and showed a need for support, but did show progress was made between 2004 and 2006. Of the 95 countries that responded, 20 already had

water plans or strategies, or a process well underway that incorporated an IWRM approach. A quarter of the countries had taken only initial steps towards preparing water plans or strategies and had not yet fully embraced the requirements of an IWRM approach. And although half of the countries were in the process of preparing water plans or strategies, they needed further work to live up to the requirements of an IWRM approach. Since this survey showed that many countries required further support, the National Dialogue Initiative was described as an initiative that would follow up on these findings.

August 2006 Country Water Partnerships meeting

In August 2006, on the eve of the 2006 GWP Consulting Partners Meeting and GWP's 10th Anniversary celebrations in Stockholm, GWP hosted its first global Country Water Partnerships (CWP) meeting. This CWP meeting was an important milestone for GWP; it was the first such effort on a global scale (over 70 countries sent representatives), and it demonstrated GWP's growing national presence; however, not all countries participating in the meeting had established Country Water Partnerships.

Well in advance of the Country Water Partnerships meeting, each participating country submitted a two-page paper outlining its national water management priorities.

National Dialogues Initiative

Responding to the second informal survey and the national water priority papers, GWP at the CWP meeting in August 2006 announced the National Dialogues Initiative (NDI). Globally, a total of 42 countries (including the Provincial Water Partnerships and the Yellow River Basin Water Partnership in China) received national dialogues funding. Most countries held more than one event and the NDI including activities of different water partnerships at sub-national level.

GWP CEE IWRM Dialogues

Global Water partnership Central and Eastern Europe

The region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), covered by GWP, has a total area of over 2.03 million km² and is mostly located in

the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea basins (see map 1). Rivers in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland discharge their flows to the Eastern Baltic Sea. The second group of countries – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine – is located in the Danube River basin which flows into the Black Sea.

The GWP CEE region



Water resources in the CEE region are important for the development of its countries, providing water for consumption, sanitation, irrigation, industrial use, navigation, fishing, recreation, and other purposes. Ecosystems depending on water form the backbone of the region's biodiversity including lakes, river basins, wetlands, coastal areas and

groundwater. Throughout the region, many water ecosystems have suffered from degradation or are threatened by pollution, overuse of surface and groundwater and habitat losses. The application of integrated approaches to water management, use and development, which meets the demands of the

population, and satisfies the needs of water ecosystems, remains a key challenge.

GWP Central and Eastern Europe consists of twelve country water partnerships that provide an inclusive and neutral platform for stakeholders. With the enlargement of the European Union in January 2007, ten countries in the region are EU members. This opens up for new joint ventures within the union, and the country water partnerships will also act as IWRM facilitators in the non-EU countries.

The programme objective is to support countries with integrated approaches to more sustainable water resources development, management and use. Over the next years, GWP Central and Eastern Europe plans to undertake several initiatives including increased multi-sectoral dialogues, and raising political will for adoption of integrated water resources management (IWRM) principles – the first phase of that goal could be implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

National IWRM Dialogues Initiative

The National IWRM Dialogues in Central and Central Europe rolled over from 2006 until 2007 in all 12 countries of the region (see table 1).

Table 1. GWP CEE National Dialogues

Country	Date	Place
Bulgaria	November 23-25, 2006	Arbanassi
Czech Republic	June 12-13, 2007	Medlov
Estonia	May 9, 2007	Tallinn
Hungary	November 13, 2006	Budapest
	May 31, 2007	Szabadkígyós
Latvia	March 22, 2007	Riga
Lithuania	November 28, 2006	Vilnius
Moldova	May 14-16, 2007	Chisinau
Poland	November 14, 2006	Warsaw
	May 9, 2007	Warsaw
Romania	April 25, 2007	Bucharest
Slovakia	June 18, 2007	Bratislava
Slovenia	April 22, 2007	Ljubljana
Ukraine	March 16, 2007	Kiev

The dialogues were generally organised by the country water partnerships in cooperation with consulting partner organisations and a wide spectre of stakeholders including governments, universities, businesses, non-governmental organisations, local municipalities and others. In some countries, e.g., Hungary and Poland, the dialogue initiative continued with more than a single event.

Additional approaches were held in Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia which typically comprised of organising an additional meeting or synthesising outcomes of previous dialogues.

We can conclude that on the local level, the dialogues have contributed to better understanding of sustainable water resources development, management and use. The examples of selected dialogues are summarised in the next part of the publication.

National IWRM Dialogues

National dialogue in Bulgaria: Addressing the needs of small settlements

Main topic of the dialogue was ecological alternatives for integrated water resources management.

In Bulgaria, water conflicts between up-stream and down-stream small settlements occur very often. This was one of the reasons for the organisation of the dialogue entitled “*Ecological alternatives for integrated water resources management*” on November 23–25, 2006, in Arbanassi village, Veliko Tarnovo region. According to GWP Bulgaria, there are 4,765 settlements providing home to 1.8 million people (about 24% of total population) left without municipal waste water treatment plant.

More than 40 participants from ministries, district government, municipalities, river basin directorates, institutes, universities and NGOs took part at the dialogue. The keynote presentations were given by Peter Ridderstolpe (Sweden) on “Natural system for wastewater and sludge management with a focus on small settlements in cold climates”; Nataliya Gudkova (Ukraine) on “MAMA-86s experience in the introduction of dry urine – diverting toilets in Ukraine”; Diana Iskrev-Idigo (Bulgaria) “Pilot EcoSan in Rural Bulgaria” and Bistra Mihailova (Germany) on “Women in Europe for Common Future Program in Region of Eastern Europe and Caucasus”. In addition to the dialogue, there was also a poster session and a field visit to the villages of Varbitza and Draganovo (Gorna Oryahovitsa Municipality).

The participants agreed that regular dialogues for decision-makers and other stakeholders would be necessary to foster implementation of more integrated water management, development and use. In the future, cost efficient demonstration project, implemented

in a small village, could serve as a successful example for other villages. The participants also called for information concerning opportunities to finance alternative waste water treatments and training materials concerning IWRM and eco-technologies for students and practitioners.

According to Elena Grigorova, Director of Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water, Veliko Tarnovo, “For the first time ever, foreign and national experts and decision-makers came together to discuss municipal waste water treatment systems suitable for people with low income and made a field trip to see such villages. We do hope,” says Grigorova “that the GWP initiative will continue in Bulgaria with a pilot project to be implemented in the near future for rural waste water treatment in a small settlement through macrophyte filters with suitable plants.”

In 2007, GWP Bulgaria presented the book “Sustainable Sanitation in Central and Eastern Europe-addressing the needs of small and medium-size settlements” widely during various events across the country. As an outcome of the dialogue and also presentation of the Sustainable Sanitation book, professors of Sofia University Biological Department “St. Kliment Ohridsky” involved the Dragomir case study and the book into the department’s curricula.

Dragomir village case study

In March 2007, GWP Bulgaria and Stanyo Tarkalanov, Mayor of Dragomir village invited 8 students from ENGREF School in Montpellier (France) to develop a case study for ecological wastewater treatment. The village, located in Saedinenie municipality, is an agricultural settlement with working drinking water supply that does not, however, have a waste water treatment plant and sewage pipes. The local population is mostly retired and ranges from 380 people during winter to 500 in summer time. “People are motivated to develop a wastewater treatment for different reasons,” says Tarkalanov.



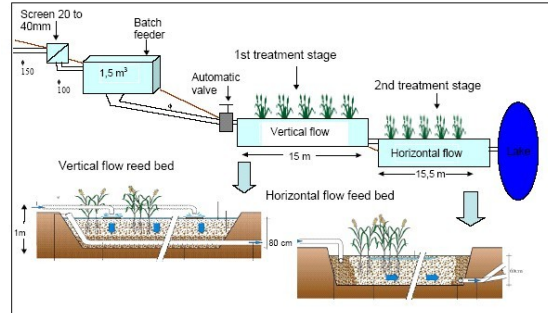
Dragomir village in Bulgaria is lacking wastewater collection and treatment system.

Credit: GWP Bulgaria

The first reason is that hepatitis epidemic occurred in a nearby village of Naiden Gerovo in January 2007. The local people fear for the infiltration of wastewater as their wells are near latrine pits and stocks of manure. The second, Dragomir, is situated a half an hour drive from the second largest city in Bulgaria and highway connecting Sofia and Istanbul. Therefore, the area has a strong development potential. Last but not least, private investors would like to develop tourist activities if

Dragomir settles its problems of waste and wastewater.

In their study, ENGREF students proposed dry toilets to avoid infiltration of wastewater from latrines and to improve sanitary conditions in the village. They also recommended sewage pipe system without rain water collection and additional macrophyte treatment plant.



Wastewater treatment scheme for Dragomir village (ENGREF-Montpellier)

The estimated investment costs are around 400,000 EUR. “I hope that together with GWP Bulgaria we can find financial resources for the preparation of technical project for sustainable sanitation of Dragomir village and later, to apply for EU Structural Funds for construction,” concludes Tarkalanov.

National dialogue in Czech Republic: Adaptation to climate change

Czech Scientific and Technical Society for Water Management in cooperation with the Czech Ministry of Agriculture, the Czech Ministry of the Environment and the Czech Water Club - Global Water Partnership, organised the dialogue on June 12-13, 2007 in Medlov.

This dialogue corresponded with the current key milestones in the process of water planning in the Czech Republic. On 23 May 2007, Czech Government approved these milestones in form of a basic medium and long term water planning document called the Plan of Major River Basins. Parts of the water planning are river basins management plans, developed by the state-owned River Boards ('Povodí'), in cooperation with self-governing regions.

One of the main principles laid down by modern water planning is active public participation and consultation during development of river basin management plans, especially among plan developers (river boards), experts, stakeholders from various sectors (agriculture, municipalities, industry). The dialogue was an excellent opportunity to discuss specific measures as defined by the approved Plan of Major River Basins of the Czech Republic.

Apart from public participation, the participants discussed impact of climate change on available water resources in the Czech Republic in the future as well as application of adaptive measures in selected economic sectors leading to a decrease in water demand and more rational water management and use. The discussion was also focused on the general measures in the area of

landscape water retention, the optimization of water regime and the system of anti-erosion and flood measures, finally, and on the possibility of changing the system of agriculture and forestry for the sake of improving the conditions of landscape water retention.

The two-day national dialogue was attended by almost 80 participants from the state administration, especially Ministries of Agriculture and the Environment, and the regional offices. In addition, experts from specialist research institutions, universities, water-supply and sewerage companies, municipalities, river boards, the Water Management Association, the Fishermen's Association actively participated at the dialogue.

The introductory speeches of the representatives of the Ministries, Jan Hodovský, Director of the Water Protection Section (Ministry of the Environment), and Libor Ansoerge, Department Head at the Section of Water Policy (Ministry of Agriculture), were followed by projection of the movie 'An Inconvenient Truth' and discussion on climatic changes, and adaptations to the changes in the future.

The workshop fulfilled expectations of the participants who would appreciate follow up next year. For those interested, the papers presented will be placed on the web pages of the Czech Scientific and Technical Society for Water Management: 'www.csvts.cz/cvtvhs/'.

The participants appreciated involvement of the Global Water Partnership Czech Republic which provide a neutral platform and ensured a high professional level of the workshop, taking place in a pleasant setting of the 'Medlov' hotel.

National dialogue in Estonia: A need for cross sectoral cooperation

GWP Estonia organised the IWRM dialogue, focused on river basin planning, on May 9, 2007 in Tallinn.

More than 50 participants, including governmental officials, regional and local administrators, water stakeholders and non-governmental organisations discussed river basin management planning in Estonia from IWRM and EU Water Framework Directive perspectives. The topics covered by the dialogue include river basin planning governance, cross sectoral cooperation, role of local governments and water pricing. The discussion showed that Water Framework Directive is covering most of IWRM principles. However, there are still challenges concerning planning, agriculture, hydro-power constructions and other sectors.

“One of the outcomes,” says Harry Liiv, Ministry of Environment, “was that the Estonian report on Millennium Development Goals, submitted to United Nations, was based on recommendations of the IWRM Dialogue.” In addition, a comprehensive overview and discussion on IWRM and WFD principles, differences and similarities was compiled and translated into English.

As a follow up to the dialogue, the Estonian Water Management Committee together with the Estonian Water Association will organize a discussion about methodology on assessment of efficiency of water protection measures. According to Liiv, “Both institutions acknowledged that the river basin management plans should be in compliance with IWRM principles.”

River basin management planning set up

In the future, the Water Framework Directive sets a stage for organisation and planning of Estonian water resources management. The Commission on Water Resources Management, working under Ministry of the

Environment, supervises and assists with river basin management planning. Besides Ministry of the Environment officials, it includes also representatives of Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs as well as scientists and experts.

On the sub-basin level, a more detailed analysis, administration and development of measures are carried out by means of sub-district river basin management plans. Working groups, comprising Ministry of Environment agencies and experts, were set up in each sub-basin to prepare management plans. Representatives of stakeholders and experts are also invited to working group meetings.

A need for cross sectoral cooperation

As the compilation of water management plans started quite recently, it is inevitable that legislation adopted years ago and within the jurisdiction of other ministries do not include requirements for consistency with water management plans. To improve the situation in the future, the Ministry of the Environment will request the addition of relevant provisions when harmonizing related acts and regulations.

As a result of rapid development in Estonia, it has been difficult to coordinate and harmonize water management plans and different water projects on various levels, e.g., national, regional and local levels. During recent years the population in the suburbs around bigger cities has multiplied and several industrial enterprises have moved out from the cities. In some regions, especially around the capital city of Tallinn, it has created difficulties to meet the demand for water and sanitation.

During national consultations, it was discovered that the time for processing of detailed and municipal planning is too short for consideration all water related issues. The inconsistency of various spatial plans, development plans and cooperation among different ministries should be considered as an inevitable transition difficulty which shall be overcome in the future.

Role of local governments

According to a new regulation that was brought into effect this year and can be considered a big step forward, the requests of municipalities for financing water protection measures from the Environmental Investment Centre are assessed on the basis of the priorities set in the sub-basin management plan. In this way, municipalities have become interested in expressing their problems and are more eager to actively participate in development of water management plans.

In addition to the water management plans, which are made for river basin districts and sub-districts, the Public Water Supply and Sewerage Act obliges local governments to develop a more detailed public water supply and sewerage development plans which are consistent with objectives of river basin management plans.

To comply with stringent legislation, rural municipalities are improving parts of their drinking and wastewater infrastructure with a support from European Union. Upon entering EU in 2004, Estonia has agreed to ensure proper wastewater collection and treatment in all settlements with more than 2000 people by end of 2010 (Urban Waste Water Directive) and to supply drinking water for settlements over 50 inhabitants by end 2013 (Drinking Water Directive).

Following the requirements of above mentioned and other WFD relevant directives (Nitrates Directive, Sewage Sludge Directive and Bathing Water Directive) and monitoring and reporting obligations to European Commission consumes considerable part of limited financial and human resources. Most Environment Investment Centre funds allocated to water resources management have been used to co-finance above mentioned local water supply and sanitation projects and therefore the possibilities to implement other measures, for example remediation of water bodies, are fairly limited.

Water pricing

The Water Framework Directive is the first legal act that introduces economic measures – one of the main principles of IWRM – into the EU water policy. In Estonia, the Environmental Charges Act has established two main environmental charges concerning water resources management: the water abstraction charge and the pollution charge for emission of pollutants into a water body, groundwater or soil which are mainly paid by companies. In addition to these charges, consumers are paying for drinking water and sewerage services.

Estonia has gradually ceased to provide water as a free economic good and within last 15 years, it has taken significant steps towards implementing the principle of the real price of water as well as the Full Cost Recovery and the Polluter Pays Principle. In 2007 the average price for drinking water supply and wastewater treatment for domestic customers has been approximately 1.55 €/m³ and for business 2.1 €/m³.

Considering the current water price level, it can be stated that in Estonia water is not a free economic good, it is valued, its use is monitored and regulated by a permit for the use of water. We can say that the principles of economic valuation of water and determination of fair water price with consideration of social factors have been relatively well observed in Estonian water resources management.

The relative importance of the Water Abstraction Charge in the price of water is low (below 1/10) and thus it does not have much influence on sustainable water use. It is the price of water not the Water Abstraction Charge, which encourages domestic consumers and enterprises to save water. At present time the Water Pollution Charge rate is lower than wastewater treatment costs and therefore it does not encourage water companies to decrease pollution loads. The main factor limiting the pollution is the amount allowed by the permit for the use of water, because if amount of pollutant discharged into the environment exceeds the permitted figures the Pollution Charge rate is multiplied by a factor of 10.

Currently, water tariffs cover operation and maintenance costs of water companies. Usually water companies admit that current water tariffs do not cover investment costs. According to the estimates of WFD's Article 5

report on Estonia, the average level to which support maintenance, upkeep and investment costs are covered is about 70%. In most EU member states water tariffs are also generally lower than the level of cost recovery.

National dialogue in Hungary: IWRM in urban areas

The national dialogue took part on November 13, 2006 in Budapest with a focus on the urban environment and integrated water resources management.

More than 80 stakeholders participated from different fields such as local authorities, ministries, NGOs, universities, regional institutions. The dialogue was opened by Miklós Persányi, Minister of the Environment and Water and Gyula Hegyi, European Parliament member. The keynote presentation was given by Gyula Reich, GWP Hungary on IWRM and urban environment.



Miklos Persanyi, the Minister of Environment, opened the National Dialogue
Credit: Miklos Keresztes

Urban areas play an important role in delivering the objectives of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. In urban areas the environmental, economic and social dimensions meet most strongly. Cities are where many environmental problems are concentrated, but they are also the economic drivers, the places where business is done and investments are made. Four out of five European citizens live in urban areas, and their quality of life is directly influenced by the state of the urban environment.

Most cities are confronted with a common core set of environmental problems such as poor air quality, high levels of traffic and congestion, high levels of ambient noise, poor-quality building environment, derelict land, greenhouse gas emissions, urban sprawl and a generation of waste and waste-water.

Local authorities have a decisive role in improving the urban environment. The diversity in terms of history, geography, climate, administrative and legal conditions calls for locally developed, tailor-made solutions for the urban environment.

Application of the subsidiary principle, where action should be taken at the most effective level also implies acting at the local level.

Many local authorities have expressed the need for specific skills to adopt an integrated approach to management involving cross-sector cooperation and training on specific environmental legislation, effective public participation and encouraging changes in citizens' behaviour. 'Face-to-face' training with the involvement of national, regional and local authorities is regarded by stakeholders as the most valuable learning method.

The fundamental premise is generally accepted that IWRM should be applied at catchments level, recognizing catchments or watersheds as the basic hydrological unit of analysis and management. At the implementation level, there is a growing conviction that integrated urban water management (IUWM) could be pursued as a vital component of IWRM within the specific problematic context of urban areas.

Cities are dominant features in the catchments where they occur, and success in IUWM will make important contributions to the theory and practice of integrated catchment management and IWRM in the broader basin context.

Taking this into account the Ministry for the Environment and Water together with GWP Hungary decided to organize a national meeting on urban environment with a special focus on Integrated Water Resource Management.

Conclusions

After the introductory presentations, lively dialogue followed which has drawn the several conclusions. The participants agreed that IWRM should be applied on the catchment level which is the smallest complete hydrological unit of analysis and management. Also, it is vital to integrate water and

environmental management. IWRM can be further strengthened through the integration of Environmental Impact Assessment, water resource modelling and land use planning.

To support active involvement of interested parties, including local people and the community, a new institutional set up is needed. The institutions should have a high level of autonomy and be transparent and accountable at the same time.

The dialogue showed that stakeholders on all levels need more tailor made trainings to apply specific issues of sustainable water management, development and use. Especially on the local level, people are not familiar with the concept of river basin management, IWRM and their respective roles.

Within institutions, appropriate arrangements are required to ensure effective inter-departmental cooperation in cases the responsibility falls outside mandate of a single department or a unit. Not surprisingly, the political will was frequently mentioned as a key to achieve effective implementation.

Regarding river basin management plans, they must be developed and monitored in close cooperation with stakeholders. The communication activities should also include reporting to the public on results, as well as listening to feedback.

“The main lesson learned from this dialogue,” says Miklós Persányi, Minister of Environment and Water, “is that more meetings and training sessions on the local level are needed to keep all stakeholders better informed on the sustainable management of water resources.”

National dialogue in Latvia: Inspired by the Daugava River

With a support from Sweden, a team of experts prepared the first ever river basin management plan in compliance with Water Framework Directive and IWRM principles.

Since 1991, Latvia went through important changes, triggered by a declaration of independency from the former Soviet Union. The country then began its talks with European Union and started a process of legislation and administrative changes. In the water sector, adoption of European Union legislation improved water services infrastructure, emission controls and authorization and others. Similar to other new EU members, Latvia has a transition period in some of the most complex legislation which is the case of Water Framework Directive. “Government officials and political will be a key to a successful implementation of the Water Framework Directive,” says Maris Ozolins, Latvia Water Club, “establishing a functional system which could later lay foundations for better water management for social and economic development.”

Opportunities and challenges

Water Framework Directive and IWRM are bringing modern principles to water management – integration of environmental, economic and social issues, basin approach, etc., Implementation of these principles provides an opportunity for building capacity of national experts in river basin management plans preparation. Also, experts and ordinary people have a better access to information and can freely participate at different stages of water management to raise their concerns.

There are however, several challenges, including lack of integrated database on the basin level. A great stock of data is still being collected by various governmental agencies within administrative borders which are not corresponding to borders of river basins. Implementation of legislation is lagging behind due to limited human and financial capacity of state institutions and adopted measures, e.g., monitoring are costly. Despite opportunity for public to take part into water management planning, experience so far shows that people

are concerned only with issues touching their backyard.

Daugava River Basin project

During 2000–2003, Latvia tested preparation of a pilot river basin management plan on the Daugava River. With a support from Sweden, a team of experts prepared the first ever river basin management plan in compliance with Water Framework Directive and IWRM principles. According to Law on Water Management, territory of Latvia is divided into four river basins, jointly managed by the Agency of Environment, Geology and Meteorology of Latvia, and the Department of Water Basins.

The main stakeholders actively involved in preparation of river basin management plans are Ministry of Environment Protection, Agency of Environment, Geology and Meteorology of Latvia, Department of Water Basins, Regional Environmental Boards and Marine Environment Board of the State Environment Service, Regional Development Agencies, local and district municipalities. Other governmental institutions include Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Regional Development and Municipal Affairs, Ministry of Welfare, Nature Protection Board and administrations of specially protected territories.

The main non-governmental stakeholders are municipal and industrial enterprises, business associations including farmers, public organizations like the Association of Fishermen, Environment Protection Club, Daugava Fund, schools, international NGOs, students and scientists e.g., from Latvian Agriculture University, State Forestry Institute “Silava”, Hydroecology Institute of University of Latvia and others.

Daugava project public participation

During development of the Daugava river basin management plan, strategy of public participation was based on Water Framework Directive which is supporting information provision, participation and consultation. The

project team prepared public participation strategy and identified most relevant group to deal with. The project team distributed draft reports to stakeholders for comments and made all additional information easily accessible upon request. Information was spread by direct mailings, electronically by website, printed media, NGO networks and during public events, such as Daugava Forum, Latvian - Swedish days in Daugavpils and Conference of Latvian Union of Intellectuals.

The Daugava project attracted political support through seminars, consultations and meeting with decision makers including Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Inter-ministerial Coordination Group and the Project Board. To reach better awareness and political support for the project, ministries were on regular information loop and they received all documents for consultation.

For better exchange of information and cooperation among various sectors, an Inter-ministerial Coordination Group was established comprising of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional development, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Traffic, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Environmental Boards, Latvian Environmental Fund, Latvian Union of Self-governments as well as the NGO's centre. The Inter-ministerial Coordination Group played an essential role in distribution of information and promotion of the Daugava project. There were two main forms of cooperation with members of the group – daily consultations and regular group meetings.

In addition to the above mentioned activities, the Daugava project team promoted active involvement of interested groups, experts and citizens. The most active stakeholders were municipalities in the Daugava river basin, specialists of central governmental institutions, Regional Environmental Boards, scientific and research institutions, reference groups,

professional associations (farmers, industrial sector, water users etc.), consultants and experts. Apart from direct mailing, e-mails, website and personal contacts, more than 30 interactive seminars were organized to ensure active involvement.

During the course of the project, several communication materials were printed and distributed including two leaflets, Daugava river basin management plan for public and manual for management of water resources supported by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. Feedback from stakeholders showed that they are generally overloaded with general communication materials and demanded tailor made information.

Media also helped to reach specific audiences, e.g., local municipalities through the Journal of Latvian Union of Self-governments “Latvijas Vestnesis”, and specialised local and national papers “Dienas Bizness”, “Lauku avize”, “Diena”, “Ogres vestis”, “Aizkraukles avize”. The public participation activities, which were tested for the first time in Latvia on a large scale, were implemented by the Advisory Boards of River Basin districts with support from the Agency of Environment, Geology and Meteorology of Latvia and the Department of Water Basins.

Role of GWP Latvia

GWP Latvia, represented by its host organisation the Latvian Water Club, took part in the Daugava project board as an NGO representative. The project board advised on preparation of the Daugava river basin management plan and the presence of the Latvian Water Club ensured that IWRM principles were taken into account. After completion of the Daugava project, the Latvian Water Club continued facilitating exchange of information and experience from local to central level and vice versa. This work will be continued in future, combined with innovative approaches, e.g., promotion of sustainable sanitation for small settlements and support to practical IWRM initiatives among local municipalities.

National dialogue in Lithuania: River basin management in IWRM context

The main goal of the dialogue was to discuss opportunities and challenges of river basin management planning and sustainable management of water resources.

The dialogue comprised two seminars. The first seminar was held on November 28, 2006, attracting 95 representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Economy, municipalities, Regional Environmental Departments, River Basin District Coordination Boards, NGOs, professional associations and private companies.

The presentations covered whole range of water management issues, including integration of territorial planning and water management; environmental, economic and social aspects of river basin planning and the role of coordination boards; river basin management and IWRM and possible conflicts between Water Framework Directive and agriculture. The participants appreciated the presentation on similarities between the Water Framework Directive and IWRM, based on the presentation of Henrik Larsen and Torkil Jøneh-Clausen from DHI Water & Environment, *EU Water Framework Directive as IWRM in the North*.

Currently, as the discussion pointed out, implementation of the Water Framework Directive is the most important, legally binding, task of governmental institutions in Lithuania. To some extent, IWRM planning and river basin management plans overlap. This led to the conclusion that implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Northern Europe, abundant with surface and ground water, could be considered as implementation of IWRM. Officials of the Ministry of Environment wanted to find out whether this is also GWP's position and whether they can report on IWRM to the United Nations using progress on the implementation of Water Framework Directive. However, municipalities lacked clear distinction between these two concepts and they were confused by the

apparent necessity to implement them at the same time.

The second seminar was held on December 1, 2006 on the occasion of Annual Assembly of Lithuanian Geological Society in the Institute of Geology and Geography. The event was attended by 146 participants from various institutions. GWP Lithuania made a presentation "*IWRM in a Year of Planet Earth*" in front of an audience which had not, as yet, been very involved in either water resources management or implementation of the Water Framework Directive.



New Year canoe trip on the Merkys River,
Lithuania

Credit: Sigitas Kalvaitis

As to the outcomes of the dialogue, GWP Lithuania has signed a long term agreement with Ministry of Environment to act as Information Centre on River Basin Management. According to Bernardas Paukstys, GWP Lithuania Director, "This will be a great opportunity to provide a neutral platform for water stakeholders and disseminate information on IWRM." GWP Lithuania has been active in the country since 2000 and therefore, IWRM is not a new concept for governmental agencies and NGOs. IWRM is well embedded into Water Law and its regulations as well the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. However, a key challenge for the future remains bringing IWRM to a wider audience, e.g., schools and experts outside the water field.

Sustainable management of water resources

In 2000, the National Commission for Sustainable Development was established to formulate sustainable development policies and coordinate preparation and implementation of projects in this field by ministries, government bodies and other institutions. The National Commission for Sustainable Development also reports to UN Commission for Sustainable Development and other international organisations on the progress in sustainable development.

At the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002, Lithuania adopted the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. The Declaration underlines that sustainable development requires a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in policy formulation, decision-making and implementation at all levels. The signatory countries also committed themselves to monitor progress towards achievement of sustainable development objectives on a regular basis.

Shortly after the Johannesburg Summit, Lithuania prepared National Strategy for Sustainable Development which was adopted by the Government in September 2003. One of the main goals is a change of water governance structure in line with international commitments (IWRM) and requirements of the European Union (river basin management principle). However, even though IWRM or the basic principles of sustainable water resources management are explicitly mentioned in official policies, plans and strategies, IWRM has not yet been fully implemented in practice.

On the national level, the Ministry of Environment is responsible for implementing the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and reporting to the National Commission for Sustainable Development.

Water governance: a need for coordination and integration

Similarly to other countries in the region, there are three levels of water management in Lithuania – national, regional and local (municipal). However, it is obvious that water

management system is too complicated and rather difficult to coordinate.

National level

In Lithuania, the Ministry of Environment is the main governmental body responsible for water management through a network of its agencies, departments, and services. Implementation of the Water Framework Directive lies in the hands of the Environmental Protection Agency created in 2003. The Marine Research Centre deals with the Baltic Sea and Curonian lagoon environment, including monitoring of surface waters and wastewater in western Lithuania. Across the country, Hydrometeorological Service is in charge of hydrometeorological observations. The Protected Areas Department manages protected areas and Geological Survey monitors and protects groundwater resources.

On the national level, there are other ministries dealing with water issues such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Interior. Although the Ministry of Agriculture is not directly involved in water management and water monitoring however, it has an impact on the quality of water by managing agricultural practices, preventing pollution from diffuse sources and maintenance of drainage network. The Ministry of Health has an important role with respect to human health and water. The Ministry is responsible for the sanitary control and elaboration of standards of all drinking water and of recreational water bodies (bathing water). The Ministry of Transport is in charge of navigation, and has a role on river management, regulation and surveillance of the inland waterways. Even though the Ministry of Interior is not directly involved in water management, its Civil Security Department deals with prevention of extreme weather events and remediation of accidents.

Regional level

Counties represent the higher level state administration in Lithuania. The government appoints the Governor of the county. The

Governor controls, among others, the management of water bodies and of protection strips and protection zones around water bodies. On the regional level, ten counties share the responsibility for water management. In addition to counties, Regional Departments of Environmental Protection, located in eight regional centres, are responsible for the enforcement of environmental legislation and implementation of environmental policy on the regional level.

Local level

Currently at local level 60 municipalities participate in water management by being responsible for drinking water supply and the collection and treatment of sewage and discharge of sewage effluents, setting prices for drinking water supply, collection of sewage and by approving permits for the discharge of effluents to sewers.

River basin management planning

After joining the European Union in 2004, changes in policy and water governance helped to introduce IWRM principles and facilitated the implementation of the Water Framework

Directive. Lithuania has designated four river basin districts: Nemunas, Lielupe, Venta and Daugava; however, water management institutions in Lithuania are established according to administrative borders and do not copy natural river basin boundaries.

Nowadays the main concern of national water policy is implementation of the Water Framework Directive and other EU water directives. Although the main EU water directives are already transposed into the national legislation (Urban Waste Water Treatment, Dangerous Substances, Nitrates, Fish Water, Drinking Water, Bathing Water Directive, etc.), the implementation of the directives will still require a lot of efforts on all levels.

Implementation of the Water Framework Directive and river basin management planning is often confused with IWRM. Sometimes there is a misinterpretation of IWRM and river basin management concepts even among water professionals. For that reason GWP Lithuania will continue with the National IWRM Dialogue series in the future.

National dialogue in Moldova: New options for IWRM

GWP Moldova, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, National Commission of the Republic of Moldova for UNESCO, the agency “Apele Moldovei”, and the institute “ACWAPROIECT” organized a number of meetings on national dialogue during 2007.

These national dialogue events were organized in different parts of the country with participation of local and central authorities. Also 2 national conferences were organized on June 12, 2007 with the presentation of new water law and discussion of the ToolBox on water management. A national conference organized on December 20, 2007 was devoted to discussions on the new sanitation practices in Moldova, development of network of biosphere reservations, agreement between Moldova and Ukraine on sustainable use of Dnester river basin and new opportunities for cooperation with EU on river basin management.

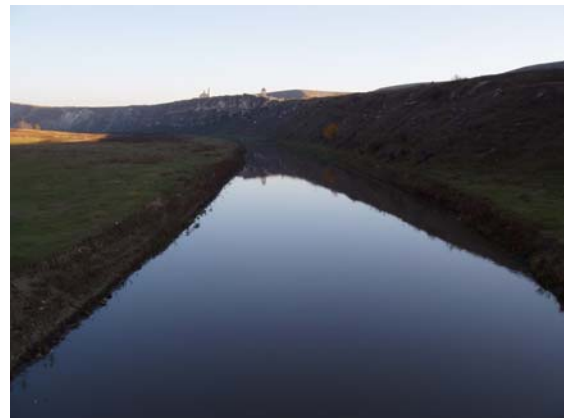
Both events were opened by the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Constantin Mihailescu, General Director of Apele Moldovei, Veaceslav Jordan and General Secretary of National Commission for UNESCO, Prof. Constantin Rusnac. The keynote presentation on river basin management in the Moldavian part of the Danube river basin was made by Dumitru Drumea, GWP Moldova.

More than 100 participants including governmental officials (Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture etc.), Agency “Apele Moldovei”, research institutions, NGOs (ECO-Tiras, Ecological Movement, Ecostrategii, etc.) REC-Moldova and local authorities discussed problems and opportunities for regional development associated with IWRM and implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Actual social and economic development in Moldova presents a number of challenges to sustainable water resources management in regard to finding the most appropriate

solutions for development of economic sector and benefits for society and environment, especially in rural areas. That is why participants outlined the necessity for involving the national GWP network in attracting relevant expertise in the development of local plans for social and economic development, preparing of new legislation initiatives and projects aimed at sustainable water management practices based on IWRM.

The main topic of the national dialogs in Moldova was *Integrated Water Resources Management in the Republic of Moldova: Achievements and Perspectives*. Actually, there are 2 main river basins in Moldova: Danube (Prut, Yalpugh and Cahul) and Dnester. According to the provisions of the Moldova-EU Action plan, the main issue in the field of water management in Moldova is the development of the integrated river basin management plans for these rivers according to the EU WFD.



The Raut River near Butuceni, Moldova
Credit: Richard Muller

Although Moldova is not an EU member state, the Moldavian water authorities have assumed responsibility to develop a management plan for the Moldavian part of the Danube river basin (Prut, Yalpugh and Cahul rivers) in the framework of cooperation under International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). During the dialogues emphasis was placed on using existing experience to address issues in the Moldavian part of the Dnestr basin.

The importance of the meeting has been underlined by the fact that local authorities are

including water related issues in the plans for social and economic development. Through its national network GWP Moldova organized a number of consultation events and the results were presented to the participants of the National Dialogues. The results obtained during consultation meetings were included in the reports submitted to different international institutions including funding agencies. This contributed to the development of water infrastructure in the regions of the country for last 2–3 years.

The dialogue helped to different stakeholders to discuss the new Water Law, development of agreements with neighbouring countries for sustainable use of river basin resources, introduction of sustainable sanitation practices, creation of new nature protected zones, and so on. Presentations during the National Dialogues also included summarising of the activities implemented in Moldova from cooperation in the Danube river basin, and identified the main gaps which could be addressed to GWP Moldova for its future work.

Dialogue outcomes

One of the dialogue outcomes is the creation of the Inter-ministerial Group, which deals with further development of river basin management planning and implement provisions of the EU WFD in Moldova. In this context GWP Moldova, through its national network, participates in the preparation of new water legislation and development of regional plans for social and economic development in regard to water management issues. The main target groups for these activities are water professionals, decision makers in local governments, NGOs and others.

In addition, participants also adopted a Joint Statement where they expressed their visions and opportunities for implementation of the IWRM principles in Moldova. During the National Dialogues it was proposed these principles have to be included in the management plans, and the implementation of

such plans should be included in further cooperation between Moldova and the European Union and promote further cooperation with neighbouring countries in this domain.

Water governance in Moldova

The main institution responsible for water management in Moldova is the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. This institution develops water management policies and legislation in cooperation with other governmental bodies with involvement of local authorities and civil society. Implementation of the policies on water management issues on national and local levels is organized through the Agency “Moldavian Waters” in cooperation with other agencies which are working under Ministries of Economy, Agriculture, Health, Education and Public Administration.

At the international level, Moldova is deeply involved in activities developed under the umbrella of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), which prepared an Action Plan for development of the Integrated Danube River Basin Management Plan. Moldavian experts in cooperation with experts from Romania and Ukraine are developing a similar plan and programme of measures for implementation in the Prut river basin.

As mentioned during the National Dialogues, strategic planning practices in Moldova should be further developed. Also missing is the planning of new water infrastructure in Moldova, while the need to attract new financial resources in this domain is becoming a key issue for the water authorities to address. As outlined by Dumitru Drumea, GWP Moldova, “Enforcement of financial, institutional and human resources is main task for water authorities in Moldova and national GWP will provide expertise for development of integrated water resources management and implementation of the provisions of the EU WFD in Moldova.”

National dialogue in Poland: Innovative governance for water management

The first high level IWRM dialogue was held on November 14, 2006 in Warsaw based Ministry of Environment.

The seminar was opened by the Chair of GWP Poland, Prof. Janusz Kindler, who welcomed Mr. Mariusz Gajda, the new Chairman of the National Water Management Administration. The new administrative body, working under the Ministry of Environment, was established according to updated Polish Water Law on July 1, 2006. In Poland, the Ministry of Environment deals with water management policy and the strategy.

Mr. Gajda presented his paper *New governance arrangements for water management in Poland* which describes a new proposal on how to overcome the institutional fragmentation of water management in the country between state government and the self-government authorities at the local, county and provincial levels. Across the country, the success of water management planning largely depends on the will of different agencies and authorities involved in water management to overcome potential conflicts of interest among them.

As shown by the discussion, the main challenge in the future will be to overcome potential conflicts of interest between different agencies and authorities involved in water management. It is clear that not all of them will greet with enthusiasm the changes considered in the proposal presented.

The second presentation was *Droughts in Poland* concentrating on the severe drought that occurred in the summer of 2006. The final

presentation was under the title *Implementation of EU Water Framework Directive in Poland – conditions for success*. “The dialogue,” says Janusz Kindler, GWP Poland, “provided an opportunity to discuss openly all difficult issues and different opinions of those involved in the management, development and use of water resources.”

More than 80 practitioners from all around the country attended the dialogue. In addition to regular GWP Poland partners, the venue attracted several newcomers as the topic of water management planning is currently on the top agenda in Poland. Based on demands of the participants, three more national dialogues were held in 2007.

IWRM in agricultural and forested basins

GWP Poland organised the second round of the National IWRM Dialogue on May 9, 2007 in Warsaw on the topic *IWRM in agricultural and forested basin*. The dialogue provided a neutral platform for stakeholders who exchanged information on current water management situation in Poland and the necessary steps for more integrated approach to water management. On request of the dialogue participants, two additional seminars were organised by end of 2007.

Education is a key

The third National IWRM Dialogue took place on June 28, 2007 in Warsaw. It highlighted importance of education on all levels for better water management for social and economic development. The summary of recommendations made by three seminars held in the National IWRM Dialogue series was published in the *Gospodarka Wodna* (“Water Management” journal of national circulation).

National dialogue in Romania: finding the gap

GWP Romania, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and National Research and Development Institute for protection of the Environment “Apele Romane” organised national dialogue in Bucharest on April 25, 2007.

More than 40 participants including governmental officials (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Education, Agriculture and Internal Affairs), National Administration “Romanian Water” with its river basin departments, National Environmental Protection Agency, research institutes (ICIM, INHGA, ISPIF), National Committee for Emergency Situations, NGOs (CCE Galati, REC- Romania, WWF-Romania) and professional Associations (ARA) discussed challenges and opportunities related to IWRM and EU Water Framework Directive. In Romania, current fast economic growth poses a certain threat to sustainable water development, management and use with economic sector competing for the same precious resource with society and environment.

The main topic of the dialogue was *IWRM Implementation: Comparison, Achievements and Needs versus EU Water Related Directives*. Although the Romania’s water management system is historically based at the river basin level, there is still misunderstanding between the relatively new concept of river basin management planning introduced by EU WFD after the country joined European Union in 2007 and IWRM.

In her introduction words to the book *Romanian Water: A Perspective Vision in the Light of EU Water Framework Directive and Integrated Water Resources Management* that was launched during the meeting, Lucia Ana Varga, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development State Secretary and the Romanian President of ICPDR in 2007 says, “Water issues are complex and they are difficult and costly to solve. We simply cannot solve ‘historical’ problems in one or two years. However, we must meet the 2015 deadline for full compliance with EU water standards,

starting from Danube’s spring water to its discharge into the Black Sea.”



GWP publications on display during National Dialogue in Bucharest, Romania

Credit: GWP Romania

Importance of the meeting has been underlined by the fact that countries have to report on IWRM and Water Efficiency Plans preparation at 16th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16) in 2008. The reports submitted for the first time in 2005 and then in 2008 showed outcomes achieved so far and commitments assumed by the countries that participated at the Johannesburg World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002.

The dialogue helped decision makers discuss the differences between two inter-related issues – IWRM and EU Water Framework Directive – and to identify gaps which could be then addressed by GWP Romania and its partners. An example of this is a provision of sanitation services which addresses only settlements over 2000 people and, therefore, leaving thousands of citizens without proper treatment of municipal waters. The presentations included case studies from Danube River basin level in the trans-boundary context as well as experiences from national sub-basins.

Dialogue outcomes

As one of the dialogue outcomes, GWP Romania in cooperation with National Administration “Apele Romane” and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development produced a brochure *Romanian Water: A Perspective Vision in the Light of EU Water Framework Directive and Integrated Water Resources Management*. The brochure

was published in Romanian and English languages. The primary target group are non-water professionals, including media, universities and decision makers in central and local government.

In addition, participants adopted a “Common Declaration” which was then submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Romanian Water Director, heads of National Water Administration “Apele Romane” and other ministries representatives present at the dialogue. The Declaration calls for creation of cross-sectoral working groups to analyse aspects covered by IWRM but missing in existing water management policies. The identified gaps will be then included into river basin management plans and other key planning documents, such as landscape plans.

Water governance in Romania

In Romania, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is in charge of nature protection and water management policies and legislation. Implementation of the policies on national, regional and local levels is in hands of Agency for Environment Protection and

National Administration “Romanian Water”. Both institutions cooperate with other agencies which are working under Ministries of Economy, Agriculture, Health, Education and Industry.

National Administration “Romanian Water” (Apele Romane) deals with water management operational issues, development of a new water infrastructure, investment management, and so on. Since 2002, “Romanian Water” has been responsible for implementation of water related EU directives and especially the Water Framework Directive EC/2000/60. The National Agency for Environment Protection works with other environment factors, e.g., air, soil, radioactivity and biodiversity as well as links among these factors and water.

On the international level, Romania closely cooperates with International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). Taking into account trans-boundary character of the Danube River, which is the second longest river in Europe, ICPDR has established a detailed action plan for the development of Danube international river basin management plan.

National dialogue in Slovakia: fostering cross sectoral cooperation

The goal of the dialogue, organised by GWP Slovakia on June 18, 2007 in Bratislava, was to inform industry, agriculture, municipalities and experts on the opportunities to actively participate in IWRM planning.

This was the first time GWP Slovakia – in cooperation with major water management organizations and the Ministry of the Environment – successfully organized the national dialogue between two decisive groups concerned with the implementation of EU WFD and other EU Water Directives. More than 100 participants, including industries, agriculture, municipalities, parliamentarians, governments, water companies, experts and non-governmental organisations officials discussed current status of EU Water Framework Directive implementation including tasks of competent authorities during river basin management planning and programme of measures.

The dialogue was held under auspices of Jaroslav Izák, Minister of Environment and Ján Slabý, Head of Parliamentary Committee for Agriculture and Environment. “Currently, water becomes a limiting factor to development of the whole society,” says Slabý, “and therefore, mutual understanding and support, proper delegation of tasks and coordination are a prerequisite for the modern and progressive water planning process leading to more sustainable water resources management, development and use in Slovakia. In context with this I am recognizing the urgent need of the unifying platform in Slovak conditions for broad and very open dialogue on real introduction of IWRM principles in our country – GWP could be such a leading organization for this task and I would be very pleased to cooperate with and facilitate personally this process.”

The dialogue was organised in three main sections – industries, agriculture, and municipalities/water companies. The outcomes of discussions were summarised into

recommendations for authorities dealing with river basin management planning.



Ján Slabý, Head of Parliamentary Committee for Agriculture and Environment gives his keynote speech

Credit: Milan Lukac

“One of the recommendations,” says Boris Minarik, GWP Slovakia Chair, “was that river basin management planning should take into consideration climate change adaptation programmes.” In addition, participants asked for methodological guidelines concerning a programme of measures and a timetable with division of tasks for every stakeholder group. As a follow up to the dialogue, GWP Slovakia will organise tailor-made workshops in cooperation with the Association of Towns and Municipalities.

Participating stakeholders have recognized the importance of dialogue between them and water organizations and institutions. Their commitments following from the valid Water Law will influence very significantly their long-term economic and production strategy. Now they understand that specific tasks for them can be properly taken if specific questions are clearly articulated by competent administration. All stakeholders groups stated their requirements for next dialogues, which means a completely new approach in their behaviour related to water managers and water decision makers. Their passive waiting for signals from water professionals has been

changed into active specifications of their needs and goodwill to organize bi- and multilateral working meetings dedicated to solving sustainable water management problems.

IWRM planning

One of the most important features of the dialogue was that it attracted experts working on implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and representatives of organisations working outside “water box”. The Water Framework Directive, which has been implemented in Europe since 2000, sets a legislative framework for water protection and sustainable water use. A new piece of water policy is based on integrated management of water resources in natural basins. Among others, integration here means coordination and harmonisation of strategic goals across key sectors, e.g., industry, agriculture, forestry, human settlements and others.

However, success largely depends on active cooperation of all interested parties during creation, update and implementation of river basin management plans which are basic tool for water resources management in basins with a vision to achieve good water status until 2015.

With regard to the Water Framework Directive, there are several deadlines for preparing of planning documents such as (1) timetable for river basin management plans preparation (December 2006), (2) survey of most significant water management problems in river basins (December 2007), and (3) a proposal for river basin management plans (December 2008).

The Directive also calls for submission of above mentioned documents to the public in order to secure active participation during river basin management planning process.

In Slovakia, the first planning document, required by Water Framework Directive, is time frame for river basin management plans which informs interested parties on partial steps, done by competent authorities during planning process. The dialogue provided an opportunity to get familiar with this document and the cooperation among the stakeholders

during planning process. The dialogue also resulted in agreement for harmonised implementation of integrated water management with a vision to achieve good water status by 2015.

Main conclusions and recommendations

Participants of the National Dialogue:

1. Appreciated:
 - a. opportunity to take part in open and concrete discussion on development of programmes of measures should be included into river basin management plans
 - b. the initiative of the Slovak Association of Towns and Municipalities which elaborated of their Strategy Against the Floods respecting the principles of IWRM.
2. Showed their goodwill to participate actively in development of river basin management plans mainly on sub-basin and local levels.
3. Asked for the opportunity to be included in working groups responsible for implementation of the EU WFD, especially in those responsible for development of river basin management plans.
4. Insist on adequate time schedules for elaboration of instructions needed for the development of programme of measures and, consequently, for river basin management plans.
5. Recommend:
 - a. to competent water organizations and institutions to run open fora on progress in development of river basin management plans
 - b. to include adaptation water management measures following from global climate changes into river basin management plans.

Suggest the establishment of the National Coordination Body for Implementation of EU WFD consisting of all ministries, including Ministry of Finance. The Conclusions and Recommendations of this Body will be obligatory for preparation of respective documents for the Cabinet, especially related to implementation of EU WFD.

National dialogue in Slovenia: How to make IWRM approach efficient?

The national IWRM dialogue meeting was held in the city of Ljubljana on April 20, 2007. The title of the conference was *How to make the IWRM approach efficient?*

As the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is legislation and IWRM is an approach, WFD in Slovenia is actually the most important matter and this sometimes makes it hard for GWP to have significant success with IWRM. One priority in the National Dialogues therefore, was to emphasize the differences between, and possible alignment with, the WFD and IWRM. During previous discussions at different occasions it becomes obvious that even the experts are not seeing clearly the differences. The emphasis was also given to the fact that river basin planning, a key part of the WFD, could benefit from consideration of IWRM principles.

The National Dialogue was divided into two parts – presentations and roundtable. The speakers were recognized experts. The presentations and discussion were on a high level, useful to the experts, yet understandable to other participating stakeholders. Participants represented governmental institutions (environment, agriculture, nature protection, planning, economics, foreign affairs, finances), municipalities, research, education, NGOs and journalists.

Besides the above mentioned themes, including the information on the river basin management plans preparation process, we discussed climate change, which are not taken sufficiently into account, but the problem of climate change is recognized and it is expected that identification of flood/drought areas as well as mitigation measures will be included to the final river basin management plans. The possibilities to use the eco-remediation methods as well as information on used and recommended communication methods for active public participation have been presented as well.

Regarding use of eco-remediation methods, it is to mention, that 50 percent of Slovenia's

people live in communities of fewer than 2000 inhabitants, and there is a significant need to use sustainable and cost effective waste water treatment. The preparation of the GWP CEE book on sustainable sanitation in small and medium settlements was made known to the participants. The participants representing municipalities and local communities were enthusiastic with the book and further cooperation with the group and GWP CEE in general.

Conclusions

The roundtable discussion was very lively and effective; a lot of significant issues and ideas were expressed. As most important ones the participants indicated:

- The cross-sectorial dialogue in the river basin management plans (RBMP) preparation process is still not efficient enough and limited to formal demands. The interdisciplinary basic knowledge is not adequate to enable the responsible experts to communicate and harmonize the interests of individual spheres of activities.
- The priorities are still oriented to the human need and do not consider ecosystems value at the adequate level. The water is also not considered as the habitat to appropriate degree.
- The more or less adequate legislation is not followed by adequate control of implementation and performing yet.
- Public participation is more or less limited to giving the information, while active involvement of stakeholders and general public is not satisfactory. There is some hesitation to start real consultation process and active public involvement in the RBMP preparation process. On the other hand the education and awareness raising is obligatory to enable the people to participate in the process of preparation the RBMP and also enable them to demand from the government to be a part of the process, if the public consultation would not take place.
- The water issues must be discussed on local level, where the people know the problems and they are also much more interested in (bottom up approach). The participants identified lack of expertise and public participation as main drawbacks for

more integrated approaches to water management.

- The participants representing municipalities called attention to the fact that they are important stakeholders who should have more influence, since they are by law responsible for waste water treatment at the local level. At the same time the number of municipalities is

relatively high, but the experience and knowledge on the issue is not adequate in many cases.

The speakers and GWP Slovenia prepared the publication and CD with all the presentation, summary of roundtable discussion and conclusions. The publication was printed in 500 copies and distributed to participants and potential stakeholders.

National dialogue in Ukraine: a focus on river basin management

GWP Ukraine and the Interagency Coordinating Group for Development of Water Resources organised the dialogue in Kiev on March 16, 2007.

Since 2002 the Ukrainian water sector has been in the process of transition to the management within river basin boundaries. There are however, different points of view regarding mandates, tasks, functions and the organizational structure of the established River Basin Organizations (RBO).

The river basin management theme *Is the transition to management within the river basin boundaries enough?* brought together approximately 50 participants from almost all relevant sectors and levels of the society, i.e., the Ministries of Water Resources (State Committee), Finance, Economy, Forestry, Communal Services, Justice, the Parliamentary Committee on the Environment, the nine key river basins (of which eight are transboundary) and the key non-governmental organisations (of rivers, environment and social sectors).

In Ukraine, amendments to the Water Code are in preparation, and transition to the basin management was proclaimed in 2002. Today the Dniestr river basin serves as a pilot basin for integrated river basin management. The Dnipro, Siversky Donets, Western Bugh, Tisza and other river basins are also involved in this development.

The dialogue was distinguished by its involvement of river basin managers from remote parts of Ukraine. Demands for capacity building and learning from more advanced countries, such as France were expressed. The opinion that river basin authorities should be legislative bodies responsible for all aspects of water management and the state of the river was mentioned by some RBOs and NGOs.

Representatives from the Ministries of Economy and Finance together with parliamentary representatives gave valuable and constructive comments on the way forward in implementing river basin management. The dialogue had very extensive media coverage,

including radio, television and newspaper articles.

The meeting was concluded with the adoption of a final resolution which will be presented to the Deputy Prime Minister. Participants also adopted a Joint Statement regarding their views on ways and means of IWRM implementation in Ukraine. It was proposed that IWRM Implementation Strategy should become a part of the recently announced plans to develop new National Environmental Strategy and should be included in the new program of cooperation between European Union and Ukraine.

After the dialogue, three other developments took place which was not mandated by changes in legislation or law, rather the actors and institutions who participated in the dialogue. Firstly, cross-sectoral coordination was strengthened and new stakeholders were included in Interagency Coordinating Group for Development of Water Resources (NGOs, business groups, academic sector) which became more transparent.

Secondly, several River Basin Councils were established by decision of oblast authorities and adopted a basin management approach and cooperation with RBOs (established State Committee for Water Management of Ukraine) to improve water management. Finally, pilot river basin management plans are being developed (or planned) for some transboundary rivers, e.g., Pripyat river (between Ukraine and Belarus), for Danube and Western Buh and planned for Dniester.

IWRM and river basin management

In Ukraine, IWRM and river basin management overlap in some cases; however, there is no formal national IWRM Plan. The Ministry of Environment is the responsible body for the plan, but due to institutional problems, no such plan has been developed or planned. Regional administrations (Oblast) are aware of the need for sectoral integration, river basin management and the value of IWRM and therefore GWP Ukraine is working closely with them to introduce IWRM.



JOINT STATEMENT (DECLARATION)

We, members of Interagency Coordinating Council on water resources development and members of Global Water Partnership Ukraine, participants of National Policy Dialogue which took place in Great Conference Hall of National Academy of Sciences, Kyiv, 16 March 2007 on sustainable development of Ukrainian water resources (see list of participants attached),

Reaffirming our commitment to

- > the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving by 2015 the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water, decisions of World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), Kiev Ministerial "Environment for Europe" Conference (Kiev, 2003), EU Water Initiative and
- > the recently announced plans of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine on the development of new National environmental strategy by, in particular, integrating environmental concerns into sectoral policies,

Recognising that

- > water resources, good-quality water-related ecosystems, water supply and sanitation are vital for security, health and well-being and can make a significant contribution to sustainable development, poverty reduction and economic growth,

Emphasizing that

- > improving water policy means progress on all three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental,

Sharing Global Water Partnership position that

- > IWRM is a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximise the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems,

- > good water governance includes measures to build capacity, participatory approaches in water management and effective provisions for transparent decision-making,

Stressing that

- > financial and human resources need to be increased to solve the water crisis;

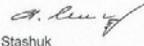
Came, after roundtable discussion, to the conclusion that in Ukraine

- ❖ the basin approach to the water resources management has been declared (in 2002) and being now implemented, in particular:
 - 1) river basin organizations have been established (in the system of State Committee for water resources management),
 - 2) draft legal and programmatic documents on basin management have been created,
 - 3) some elements of basin and integrated water resources management are used: complex schemes of use and protection of water resources, reservoirs cascade management, water cadastres, interagency water councils with public participation etc,
 - 4) river basin councils are created from the grass-roots,
 - 5) during last years the state budget funding for water programs is provided in bigger (while still smaller than planned) amounts,
- ❖ the progress in this area, however, could be bigger and more concrete;

So we call our partners and commit ourselves to:

1. make key contribution to the paragraph 26 of Johannesburg Plan of Implementation by further transition from basin to integrated water resources management in Ukraine and to develop the Action Plan for this transition,
2. develop, within National Environmental Strategy/Action Plan framework, the strategy and action plan for implementation of integrated water resources management in Ukraine,
3. develop River Basin Management Plans for pilot basins (Tisza, Dniester),
4. introduce to the Water Code the following key principles of integrated water resources management:
 - widening of river basin organization mandates to make them the plenipotentiary managers of all river basin water resources,
 - financial mechanisms of basin management with delegation of responsibility and cost recovery (including payments for ecosystem services) to the basin level,
 - compulsory development of River Basin Management Plans,
- establishment of river basin councils and,
- basin agreements between key users and other stakeholders;
5. on the basis of water partnership and EU Water Initiative, and recalling its commitments made in Johannesburg, call to increase and deliver resources for implementation of integrated approaches to river basin management (particularly for transboundary watercourses), to support the establishment and strengthening of river basin organizations and of appropriate regional legal frameworks, to encourage the development of innovative financing mechanisms, including water pricing policies that are sensitive to the poor, and to attract private sector involvement and investment over the following years;
6. propose to include cooperation on development and implementation of integrated water resources management strategy/action plan into the new EU-Ukraine agreement;
7. create, on the basis of Interagency Coordinating Council on water resources development and Global Water Partnership, the joint platform for better coordination and communication regarding implementation of integrated water resources management in Ukraine and delivery of water resources aid.

On behalf of Interagency Coordinating Council on water resources development


V. Stashuk
Chairman, State Committee for Water Management of Ukraine

On behalf of Global Water Partnership


B. Guterstam
GWP Network Officer for Central and Eastern Europe

Unlike strategic planning, which is not well developed, sectoral water policy is strong but lacking funds. "In the future," says Andriy Demydenko, GWP Ukraine, "more concrete materials and IWRM tools are needed to make them attractive for water practitioners. In particular, there is a need for development of financial mechanisms of integrated basin management and practical knowledge and examples of river basin management planning development and implementation," adds Demydenko.

Conclusions

Despite their common past, the dialogues showed a great deal of diversity among countries of Central and Eastern Europe. They truly reflected priorities on the national level ranging from river basin planning, sanitation issues, IWRM in urban areas, water governance, cross sectoral cooperation and others. For country water partnerships, the meetings provided an opportunity to clarify the European Union concept of river basin planning brought by the Water Framework Directive *vis à vis* IWRM planning.

The dialogues also helped to identify gaps that could be later addressed by GWP and its partner organisations. One example of such activity is the GWP CEE sustainable sanitation initiative which revealed that more than 20 million people, especially in rural areas have no access to proper municipal waste water treatment services. We must mention the GWP CEE long term cooperation with the World Meteorological Organisation in the framework of the Associated Programme on Floods Management which is focused on flash floods, one of the most devastating weather extreme events occurring in most CEE countries. The programme helped to improve cooperation between weather forecast centres, emergency services and local municipalities in case of flash floods.

In most cases, outcomes of dialogues were instrumental to governments reporting to UN DESA on the progress of IWRM Plans and Water Efficiency Plans at the 16th session of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-16).

As to the outcomes of the dialogues, they led to common declarations with governments, strengthening cooperation with major stakeholders and also changes in legislation. In Ukraine, the meeting participants proposed that IWRM Implementation Strategy should become a part of the recently announced plans to develop new National Environmental

Strategy and at the same time, it should be included in the new programme of cooperation between European Union and Ukraine. Even though not all changes can be attributed to dialogues itself, they certainly showed a synergic effect with ongoing national water management processes.

In Romania, for example, a Common Declaration considers IWRM as overarching aim to which European Union water related directives contribute and create synergic effects. The Declaration calls upon government to keep commitments arising from the World Summit for Sustainable Development and Millennium Development Goals even during demanding process of implementing European Union legislation.

The dialogues reached stakeholders outside traditional water box, such as Association of Towns and Villages and Parliamentary Committee for Agriculture and Environment in case of GWP Slovakia. The outcome of the cooperation is promotion of regional sustainable sanitation study on sustainable sanitation among local municipalities and a proposal for thematic dialogues.

The dialogues also attracted not only new stakeholders but also financial commitments by the partner organisations. In many countries, the GWP water partnerships are planning to continue with the dialogues with their own resources and therefore, we can not consider them as one-stop shop activity.

GWP CEE has been running thematic IWRM dialogues since its establishment in 1998. These dialogues were using largely top down approach with well developed methodology and background documents. National IWRM dialogues were, however, driven by the demand of the GWP partners which showed a real added value of the Partnership. The meetings also clearly demonstrated that country water partnerships are now recognised IWRM facilitators able to bring together different players to discuss complex issues of integrated water management.

The Global Water Partnership (GWP), established in 1996, is an international network open to all organizations involved in water resources management: developed and developing country government institutions, agencies of the United Nations, bi- and multilateral development banks, professional associations, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

GWP was created to foster Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), which aims to ensure the coordinated development and management of water, land, and related resources by maximizing economic and social welfare - without compromising the sustainability of vital environmental systems. The GWP provides a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue at global, regional, national and local levels to promote integrated approaches towards more sustainable water resources development, management and use.

GWP has established a network of regional partnerships in Central America; South America; the Caribbean; Southern, Eastern, Central and West Africa; the Mediterranean; Central and Eastern Europe; Central Asia and the Caucasus; South Asia; Southeast Asia and China. The GWP Secretariat is located in Stockholm, Sweden.

The GWP mission, is to support countries in the sustainable management of their water resources.

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