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# Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro

## 3rd Progress Report



WORKING FOR THE DANUBE AND ITS PEOPLE

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## PREFACE

This Report is prepared for component 3.4 of Objective 3 of the Danube Regional Project (phase 2).

The overall focus under Objective 3 is to enhance awareness-raising in civil society and reinforce the participation of NGOs and other interested parties in water management and pollution reduction (nutrients and toxic substances) with particular attention to transboundary cooperation and river basin management in the context of the Water Framework Directive.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of Component 3.4 is to support emerging processes of improved public participation in environmental decision making, with emphasis on better access to environmental information and public participation in decision making on hot spot prevention and cleanup. The project builds capacity in government officials who are the “front lines” of access to information and responsible for implementing public participation, using targeted training and technical assistance activities carefully tailored to the needs and circumstances of each country. National and local NGOs and the public involved in the Danube and water-related issues are considered critically important stakeholders and partners of the officials. Engaging all of them actively in capacity building will support full and effective public involvement in planning in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and cleanup and prevention of future Danube hot spots. As noted by the funder, these impacts should last long after the Danube Regional Project (DRP) has been completed.

This report covers the period mid December 2005 through June 2006 (the previous report was completed in December 2005). In this six-month period, the major accomplishments of the Consortium of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), Resources for the Future (RFF) and New York University School of Law (NYU) are:

- > Continued work on country activities in each of the five countries;
- > Continued work on demonstration (pilot) projects in each of the five countries;
- > Completed a second round of national workshops in all five countries;
- > Conducted a Steering Committee meeting;
- > Initiated various activities for communication and dissemination of the results of the project including a final Basin-Wide Dissemination Meeting; and
- > Engaged in other planning activities for future phases of the project.

In all these, the Consortium has completed a number of milestones and deliverables, and reached substantial results.

This report has three parts. The first part describes in detail the activities over the past six months since mid-December 2005, the period covered by the second progress report. It does not deal with those activities which have been already covered in the Inception report submitted in December 2004 or the first and second progress report. Part I will provide the project donors and the overall DRP and ICPDR management with an overview of the most important steps taken, findings and decisions made, and results achieved in the past six months of the project.

The second part of the report describes the activities that will be undertaken in the last six months and the various work products or deliverables that are prepared for these activities or will result from them. Part II starts with a short description of these activities. It also provides an overview of the detailed work plan, which lists all the activities, those that have been already completed and those ahead, as well as the proposed changes in their timing.

Part III includes an explanation of the financial report for the period of December 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006. This report is added as an annex.

## 1. ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST 6 MONTHS

### 1.1. Second round of national workshops

The second round of national workshops took place in March and April 2006. Members of the Consortium were involved in all preparations, helped to design the final agenda and the list of participants and participated in all of the workshops. Representatives of the Danube Regional Project, Rayka Hauser and Marcella Fabianova, also participated in all but the BiH workshop. The workshops served as an opportunity to meet with the members of the national teams in each country and discuss the progress they are making with regard to country activities and demonstration projects. In each country, the meeting brought together relevant government officials at the national, regional and local level, NGO representatives and in some cases representatives of business and media.

The following activities took place during all of the workshops:

- > progress of the overall project was presented and discussed;
- > information was provided about recent developments in the Danube Regional Project;
- > progress and the results of the country activities and demonstration project were reviewed;
- > demonstration projects were presented for discussion and recommendations were made for future work;
- > drafts of key products were commented and analyzed in small working groups;
- > problems and difficulties for the successful implementation of the country activities and the demonstration project, as well as lessons learned and best practices gained during the project were identified;
- > future steps of the project as well as the dissemination of the results of the country activities were designed and agreed;
- > possibilities for the sustainability of project results were discussed including the possibilities of official endorsements.

Below, we mention specific issues that were discussed in particular national workshops:

<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b> national meeting, Brcko, March 27-28
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- > review of drafts of the manual for officials and the brochure for NGOs;
- > analysis of the new draft water law and recommendations on preparing a by-law on access to information and public participation;
- > presentation and review of draft of meta information system/data base.

**Bulgaria** national meeting, Sofia, March 30-31

- > presented and discussed an assessment comparing practices of some EU countries and draft recommendations for overcoming access to information barriers created by claims of document or data confidentiality;
- > identified topics for a capacity building workshop for officials;
- > discussed a survey of the existing web sites of River Basin Directorates and proposals for improvements/unification of such sites to provide relevant information to the public;
- > reviewed a brochure for NGOs and the public on on-line water related information sources.

**Croatia** national meeting, Varazdin, March 23-24

- > reviewed manual for officials and booklet for NGOs;
- > discussed draft proposal for trainings;
- > shared good practices for access to information developed by Croatian institutions (specifically, Varazdin city council);
- > shared relevant developments regarding the EU accession and redesigning of Croatian Water Information System.

**Romania** national meeting, Sinaia, 10-11 April:

- > reviewed drafts of manual for officials and brochure for NGOs/public ;
- > shared and discussed results of survey conducted to address the communication-related activities of River Basin Committees (RBCs);
- > provided input on recommendations for NGO representation on RBCs;
- > collected ideas to improve the agenda of the capacity building workshop for improving the skills of RBC members.

**Serbia and Montenegro** national meeting, Kanjiza, March 14-15:

- > reviewed drafts of the manual for officials and brochure for NGOs/public;
- > discussed topics and venue for the capacity building workshops for officials and NGOs.

## 1.2. Dissemination and communications activities

In the past reporting period, the Consortium worked with Rayka Hauser and Paul Csagoly of the DRP to formalize a plan for dissemination and communications activities so as to assure wide understanding of the goals, purposes and results of the project and its various activities. As a kind of catalogue of what has actually transpired in the project and a guide for future activities, the draft report notes activities including the usual means of communication and dissemination such as email, phone calls and conference calls and use of the Project listserv. New documents such as country products and reporting on the demonstration project were added to the project webpage on the REC website and to the closed webpage (a webpage only accessible to project participants). An article about Component 3.4 was placed in the most recent version of Green Horizon, the REC

magazine. It is the third of such articles giving the readership of the magazine updates on the progress and achievements of Component 3.4. Project communication was further facilitated by the active participation of Consortium members in national workshops in each of the participant countries (March-April 2006).

The Communications Strategy, which is being developed, will record and categorize all these communications and dissemination activities. In the Strategy, the communications and dissemination activities of the project have been divided into five sub-strategies:

- > internal communications;
- > communications on and dissemination of government manuals;
- > NGO and public awareness;
- > increasing awareness and participation of local stakeholders at demonstration project sites;
- > dissemination of project results to a basin-wide audience.

For each of the sub-strategies a background, a desired outcome, one or more target audiences and a list of products and activities is given.

### 1.3. Carrying out country activities

Since the last Progress Report, each participating country has been focused on carrying out the activities agreed in the country activity plans and on carrying out the demonstration projects, reported in section 1.4.

Country activities are implemented under the guidance of the operational teams and the Consortium. Country consultants have prepared various draft materials and products based on agreements made in national meetings and incorporated into the agreed terms of reference. Drafts have been, and will in some cases continue to be, commented by the Operational Team, REC Country Offices, the Consortium, and a working group of officials, experts and NGOs who have relevant expertise in the field. The Consortium also has participated in major events, such as the second round of national workshops discussed above, and provides examples in the form of options and other input to make the country products more complete. REC, RFF and NYU have been in constant phone and email contact with the various efforts and some Consortium members traveled to the countries to provide assistance outside of official meetings, or when it might be useful to advance the aims of the country activities. The Consortium has also provided assistance for designing and implementing capacity building activities.

The following progress has been made on country activities in each specific country:

#### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

##### **1. Contribution to development of bylaw(s) and procedures to implement relevant provisions of the new Water Law**

BiH has chosen to institute a process to improve access to information and public participation through a bylaw to the Federal Law on Waters. The specific process included preparing a draft analysis and potential solutions which was discussed in the March national workshop as well as the preparation of a draft bylaw, which continues to undergo analysis and comment from a variety of



experts and interest groups. When comments are concluded at the end of June, the draft will be finalized and submitted to the ministries.

## **2. Contribution to the development of Water Data Base**

A meta information system/data base has been constructed to respond to a need to identify which are the authorities holding water-related environmental information and the ways of accessing this information. The process began with an assessment of available water related information and data collected by responsible authorities. The findings and system were discussed in the BiH national workshop with governmental officials, experts, NGOs and the Consortium. The meta database and the narrative report are being finalized and will be uploaded to the REC CO web site with a short introduction and guidance for its use.

## **3. Manual for authorities**

The first draft of the Manual for Officials for providing public access to water related information was discussed in the second national workshop. More recent drafts reflect comments received then and afterward. The final draft has been prepared in June and has been circulated for comments by the Operational team, National team and the REC CO. The draft will be finalized afterwards and published in September.

## **4. NGO brochure on access to information**

NGO and country partners and the Consortium provided feedback on drafts of the informational brochure on good practices on access to information and public participation in environmental and water related issues for NGOs. A new draft is currently undergoing comment. The brochure will be finalized afterwards and printed in September.

## **Bulgaria**

### **1. Assessing and improving rules and regulations for confidentiality of environmental and water related information**

The Bulgarian country team is engaged in a systematic process to overcome barriers to access to information that are presented by claims of confidentiality. An assessment, including a survey among authorities, NGOs and businesses, and a comparison with practices of some EU countries, concluded in draft recommendations. These were presented and discussed in the second national workshop and discussed in the Operational Team. The resulting draft has been submitted to the relevant departments of the Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW) for comment.

### **2. Capacity building for authorities**

The survey referenced above identified the need for developing good practices and means to overcome failures to implement the existing procedures for active/passive access to water related environmental information. Discussions in the national workshop identified potential topics for training sessions for officials involved in handling such information and requests. The training will be organized in September or beginning of October.

### **3. Enhancing the active dissemination of information on environment and water through the web page for the River Basin Directorates (RBDs)**

The web sites of RBDs are an important form of communication. A survey showed some needs for improvements. Initial discussions including recommendations for improvements took place between

representatives from RBDs and MoEW in January 2006 and were discussed also in the second national meeting. The recommendations include the unification of the up-loaded data format by all directorates and the development of the Danube Region Basin Directorate's (BD) web site. As a result, the web page of the Danube Region BD's web site is being upgraded by using a similar structure as other RBDs. The Danube Region BD's web site was launched on Danube Day, on June 29. Later an on-line section for frequently asked questions will be added. The web sites of two other directorates (Plovdiv and Varna) will also be upgraded with a section regarding project activities. Experts providing information from RBDs, MoEW, etc. have been involved in the process.

#### **4. Brochure for NGOs and the general public**

The first draft of a brochure to provide NGOs and the general public with information on what are the on-line resources (including major categories of institutions and organizations which process and provide information about water resources through their web sites) was discussed in the second national workshop. Workshop participants, experts and NGOs provided comments, specifically suggesting that the brochure should also include information and useful tips on how to access environmental and more especially water related information. It was also decided to develop an on-line version of the brochure. After the workshop, a final draft was prepared and comments were collected for further improvements. The printed and on-line versions of the brochure will be published in July.

### **Croatia**

#### **1. Development of the Water Information Manual – a model of accessing and disseminating the water related information**

A draft manual was created that draws on experience from EU countries (Netherlands, Poland, Hungary) and the USA. It was discussed by a working group and during the second national workshop. The draft was put on the web site to collect further comments and a new draft, incorporating comments and suggestions, will be ready in August and published in September. The manual is aimed primarily for use by the Directorate for Water Management and Croatian Waters employees and other local/regional bodies that manage water related information. The manual will be presented and used during planned training sessions (activity 3).

#### **2. Development of the Access to Water Information Booklet (for the general public and NGOs)**

Based on a questionnaire, main target groups and their problems with access to water related information were identified and a first draft for the Booklet was prepared by NGO experts. This draft was discussed by a working group and during the second national workshop. The draft contains information on relevant laws, conventions, regulations and web pages, as well as an explanation of the right to access to information, cases and practical examples, a description of the role/opportunities of civil society, and a tool kit on how to participate in decision-making processes, and how to write requests.

The Booklet will be finalized by September and the coordinating NGO is planning to promote the brochure through a series of media events. Additionally, video material will be produced which is going to be used for educational purposes.

#### **3. Institutional capacity building program for public officials and relevant stakeholders**

The concept and agenda for three 1-day interactive trainings were discussed in the second national workshop and then designed and discussed by the Operational team, the REC CO and the Consortium. The training sessions will be held in September 2006 in Zagreb, Sisak and Slavanski Brod, focused on the practical implementation of the requirements presented in the Manual (Activity 1).

## **Romania**

### **1. Improvement in the functioning of the River Basin Committees (RBCs)**

A survey addressed to RBC members and to those groups that are represented by elected members on the RBC, gained valuable insights into how RBCs are currently functioning with regard to communication, information dissemination and public participation. The findings were shared in the second national workshop, input was collected and recommendations were made. Based on this, topics for a capacity building workshop were identified. The workshop will take place in September 2006. Members of all Romanian RBCs will be participating in the workshop. The workshop will focus on practical examples of consultation, access and participation, with a special focus on obligations arising from the EU Water Framework Directive.

### **2. Development of manual for authorities**

A first draft of the manual was prepared and was commented on by the country team, the Consortium and the participants at the second National Meeting. The second draft was recently submitted and it will undergo a second round of comments from officials, NGOs and the Consortium before finalization. The draft will be finalized and published in September.

### **3. Development of brochure for wider public and NGOs**

A first draft was circulated for comment on the general website for NGOs in Romania ([www.ngo.ro](http://www.ngo.ro)), and commented extensively by the Consortium. Input was also collected from all participants to the second national meeting. The second draft will also be circulated for comments, finalized and published in September.

The brochure will have two parts: a simple brochure for the general public covering issues that will facilitate access to information and give assistance to where and how information can be found and how the public can be part of the decision making process, including useful tips and examples. The second part provides an extended and more in-depth textual version for NGOs. The materials will be also put on CDs. The CDs will also include a compilation of updated legislation.

## **Serbia and Montenegro**

### **1. Development of Manual for Officials**

The first draft was discussed in the second national workshop. The text was finalized based on discussion and comments provided by the workshop participants and the Consortium. The draft includes a description of relevant national, European and international rules and regulations and provides advice and good examples on practical implementation. A second draft was put on the website for comments for members of Operational team, workshop participants and REC CO at the end of May. The final version will respond to all useful comments and will be published in September.

## **2. Development of a Brochure for NGOs and Public**

The first draft of the brochure containing practical tips and good practice examples was presented and discussed in the second national workshop. The second draft was prepared in May taking into account the comments provided by officials, NGOs and the Consortium in the workshop and after. Both versions were put on the web site for comments. After finalization, the draft will be published in September.

## **3. Capacity Building workshops for officials**

A two-day capacity building workshop will be held in September to provide experience and practical tools for day-to-day implementation to officials that will be using the manual. They will be trained in how to use the new laws and draft laws related to access to environmental and water information. The workshop will also provide opportunity for final comments on the draft manual.

## **4. Capacity Building workshop for NGOs**

A one-day capacity building workshop for NGOs will be held back-to-back with the workshop for officials, with one joint session including both officials and NGOs. Issues covered in the draft brochure will be presented including practical knowledge for NGOs concerning implementation of the new laws. There will also be a final possibility for NGOs to provide input on the text of the brochure. Also, the preliminary lessons from the Demonstration Project and good practices on sharing water related information and public participation from Slovenian and Hungarian NGOs will be presented.

## **1.4. Carrying out demonstration projects**

Along with the Project Managers in the REC Country Offices, the Consortium plays a continuing strong role in the implementation of the Demonstration Projects. After selection and the process of setting up the projects, one part of this is close monitoring, facilitated by phone and email communication and by face to face meetings that took place in the second round of National Meetings, which included, as noted, country officials, stakeholders and NGOs including those responsible for the Demonstration Projects. The Consortium attends the most important events that have significance for the success of the Demonstration Projects. Regular briefings about the progress of the implementation process ensures communication and enables the team to provide appropriate fine-tuned assistance on issues as they come up, particularly incorporating lessons learned in the NGO brochures and the other country products or activities. The Consortium also responds to requests that come up on an ad hoc basis.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**"Inclusion of citizens, NGOs, industry and relevant authorities in making decision process related to water information in Lukavac" carried out by the Ecological Association of Citizens, "Eco-Green" Lukavac**

This project assesses obstacles to public access to water pollution-related information and works to achieve improvements in the process of information flow among authorities as well as between the authorities and the public. Public participation is one of the tools for developing these improvements.

Since the last progress report, with assistance from the REC Country Office and the Consortium, Eco-green Lukavac has:

- > convened and facilitated discussions on the findings concerning access to water related information;
- > assisted the design of roundtable discussions for brainstorming and for identifying options and possible solutions;
- > provided input for skills and knowledge-building capacity activities on participatory approaches for representatives of authorities, NGOs and the community in general;
- > begun the process of transferring the lessons learned and useful approaches into materials for the NGO community on the national level, and incorporating good practices and other recommendations into the materials for the authorities.

### **Bulgaria**

#### **"The Right to Know and to Participate in Water Management" carried out by the Association for useful activities "Ecomission 21 century," Lovech**

The project plans to accomplish a variety of activities and initiatives for improving Access to Ecological Information in Lovech/Troyan Region, involving support of River Basin Directorates (with special emphasis on Directorate websites as a vehicle for conveying information).

Since the last Progress Report, with assistance from the REC Country Office and the Consortium, Ecomission 21 century has accomplished the following:

- > questionnaires were sent to five regional and local institutions in order to identify what types of information they retain;
- > 17 requests for environmental information provision were sent to local and national institutions responsible for information on the Osam river;
- > answers to the information requests have been analyzed and barriers to access to water-related information have been identified;
- > public and media outreach activities were organized;
- > planning for a capacity building workshop (July 6-7 in Apriltzi) has started. The workshop is meant to increase the knowledge of institutions, local authority representatives and NGOs on methods and measures for improved information access and participation.

### **Croatia**

#### **Osijek Water Forum – Enhancing public involvement in wastewater management, carried out by the Green Osijek Ecological Association**

The project establishes a broad stakeholder body, the Water Forum, to improve communication within the community and with the relevant authorities and institutions about the development of a waste water treatment plant. Additionally, the activities will further the implementation of the Croatian Water Law consistent with the EU Water Framework Directive and will improve current practices under the Law of the Right to Access to Information.

Since the previous progress report, with the support of Country Office and the Consortium, Ecological Association Green Osijek implemented the following activities:

- > roundtables and trainings were organized to establish the Osijek Water Forum. The training components include the development of a public communication and participation plan for the process of designing/fundraising/building and managing a waste water treatment plant;
- > experience from other countries was shared;
- > public and media outreach activities were organized, with Danube Day as the main promotional event.

### **Romania**

#### **“Taking Care of the River together with its Beneficiaries” carried out by Focus Eco Center, Tirgu Mures**

Unique among the demonstration projects, this models a process (the Mures River model) for improved NGO participation in River Basin Committees (RBC) and improving the flow of information to, and involvement of, represented interest groups and the public in RBC water management issues, using the EU WFD as a starting point.

Since the previous progress report the NGO Focus Eco Center, with the support of Country Office and the Consortium, has implemented the following activities:

- > the communication problems within the Mures River RBC have been identified;
- > a process and methodology have been developed so as to ensure improved representation of NGOs through elected representatives;
- > a capacity building seminar has been organized to tackle issues of cooperation of sub-basin stakeholders, NGOs and RBC members on water-related decision making;
- > water-related information, good practice examples and lessons learned at the national level were transferred into draft products.

### **Serbia and Montenegro**

#### **“Demonstration Project in Bor” carried out by the Association of Young Researchers**

The aim of the project is to increase public access to information about wastewater problems and the utility of public participation in the successful resolution of these problems. To this end, an emissions database has been established, awareness raising campaigns were organized, as well as electronic networking and sharing of information to improve the capacities of NGOs and local authorities to request and give access to information and developing concrete methods and procedures for securing such public access to information.

During the period that passed since the previous progress report the Association of Young Researchers of Bor, with the support of Country Office and Consortium, implemented the activities listed below:

- > set up a wastewater/drinking water information database and attached network for sharing information;
- > designed instructions on how to establish collection points for gathering, processing and distributing information;
- > carried out public and media outreach activities and established a web site;
- > planned for a capacity building event for local authorities and local NGOs.

## **1.5. Second Steering Committee meeting**

The 2nd Steering Committee Meeting for project component 3.4 was held on March 13, 2006 at the Regional Environmental Center Country Office for Serbia and Montenegro in Belgrade.

The meeting objectives were to:

- > review and discuss the progress of the project component;
- > inform about the upcoming component tasks in the next 7 months;
- > discuss the concept of the Danube River Basin Wide Dissemination Meeting;
- > provide support and strategic direction for the implementation of the project component.

The meeting, chaired by Rayka Hauser from DRP, was attended by the Heads of Delegation or their representatives from Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro, the DEF representative, the representative of DRP and ICPDR and members of the Consortium including the REC Country Office. Two DRP and two ICPDR representatives were unable to attend due to a snowstorm and therefore Rayka Hauser represented them. Bosnia and Herzegovina was unable to send a representative.

In the first half of the meeting, the Consortium presented a summary update of the activities undertaken in the previous 10 months, discussing the implementation of country activities and demonstration projects, the results of the 2nd regional workshop and efforts made to date by the Consortium concerning communication of activities and results. Also, an overview was provided of lessons learned in the Study Tours and, more generally, in the course of implementation of the project. Finally the activities to be expected in the remaining time of the project (until December 2006) were described.

The Consortium's presentations were followed by a discussion among the members of the Steering Committee evaluating the progress to date. Meeting participants were unanimous in expressing their satisfaction with the progress to date and their support for the ongoing activities. The meeting then turned to discussion and approval by the Steering Committee of upcoming activities. Specifically, the group discussed what should be the structure and purposes of the anticipated Basin-Wide Dissemination Meeting and how best to make the products and outcomes of the component in each country sustainable beyond the termination of the Component and of the DRP. A number of excellent ideas were discussed and commitments were heard from all participants concerning ways the considerable work to date could be continued and extended. The activities

during the past 10 months, the plans for the next period as well as the financial report were approved by the Steering Committee.

## 1.6. Lessons learned

The first progress report listed 10 lessons learned in the first 9 months of the project. In the second progress report 9 more lessons were added. The following supplements those previous lists. These lessons were presented at the most recent Steering Committee meeting in Belgrade. Subject-wise there may be some overlap between this list and the previous lists of lessons learned.

### ***Lessons learned by participants***

- > Government agencies on all levels need concrete and clear procedures for accepting, processing and responding adequately to information requests,
  - o Useful examples of such procedures are available in other countries, and from earlier projects,
  - o The art is to understand how best to adapt these examples to the specific national/local conditions.
- > It is important for government agencies to know what kind of information they have and where this information can be found within the agency:
  - o Databases and other ways of gathering and organizing information are essential.
- > Setting clear rules and procedures for what information is legitimately confidential will make release of other information less difficult.
- > Advocacy for change by NGOs can be a combination of criticism and partnership with the government, depending on specific issues.
- > In developing alliances with each other, NGOs should look for points of agreement even with groups they might otherwise disagree with, acknowledging that the areas of agreement might be limited.
- > Engaging the broader public in issues of access to information and public participation requires significant outreach, clear language and inclusiveness.
- > Without the trust, confidence and interest of the public, government agencies are isolated and their decisions may not be optimal.
- > Government agencies need public allies at every stage of regulation and implementation in order to strengthen these regulations and this implementation.
- > Involvement of the public leads to increased essential practical, local and sometimes technical knowledge.
- > Access to information and public participation can increase respect for rights and laws.

### ***Project related lessons***

- > Sharing of lessons and practices between countries can ensure better progress in each country.
- > Collaborative efforts of government officials and NGO representatives reduce mutual suspicion and help build government-NGO-bridges.
- > Iterative processes help build solid and sustainable results.



- > Learning-by-doing is critical to build long lasting capacity with government officials and NGOs and ensures that they feel ownership of the issues they have been working on.

***Lessons for the Consortium***

- > Change that involves altering the thinking and behavior of human beings is a step-by-step process, where small successes can breed more success.
- > Participants are predominantly interested in practical ideas, less in theory.
- > The Consortium is in a unique position to facilitate learning:
  - o It has in-depth knowledge from other countries
  - o It is able to build bridges between sectors within countries, and between countries
  - o It assists with “cultural interpretation” to make lessons relevant to local circumstances.

## 2. ACTIVITIES TO COME IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS

### 2.1. Finalizing country activities and reporting

The participants in the five countries are currently completing their commitments. Their timetables and tasks depend, as noted above, on the decisions made in each country and is indicated in Section 1.3. Depending on the country, the “products” expected include citizen brochures, manuals to assist government officials in their understanding of their duties with respect to access to information and water-related environmental public participation, capacity building workshops for government officials and NGOs providing practical tools to work on a day-to-day basis in access to information and public participation issues, as well as various draft regulations and/or by laws.

The products and lessons gained in their development will be reported in papers that the Consortium, in cooperation with the country partners and demonstration project managers, will prepare for the October Basin-Wide Dissemination Meeting. Lessons derived from those experiences will be distilled out for purposes of discussion and basin-wide sharing.

### 2.2. Finalizing demonstration projects and reporting

Parallel with the Country activities (and in some cases, coordinated with them), the five countries are currently completing their commitments to the demonstration projects. Their timetables and tasks depend, as noted above, on the decisions made in each country. Most countries either have completed or will soon complete various planned training efforts. Depending on the country, the expected “products” include:

- > information brochures on what and how information is available;,,
- > databases (including information sources, substances, emissions, stakeholders contacts, etc.);
- > improved local understanding of water-related pollution and its local impacts ;
- > the establishment of various tools (local committees, websites) to provide a platform for on-going discussion and resolution of issues raised;
- > recommendations on improvements for public access to water related pollution information at the local community level;
- > recommendations on how the NGO sector can influence decision making processes as a model for other stakeholders.

As with the Country Activities, the products resulting from the demonstration projects and the lessons gained in their development will be reported in papers that the Consortium, in cooperation with demonstration project partners, prepares for the October Basin-Wide Dissemination Meeting. Lessons derived from those experiences will be distilled out for purposes of discussion and basin-wide sharing.

## **2.3. Finalizing communications strategy**

The Communications Strategy developed in partnership with Rayka Hauser and Paul Csagoly from DRP will be finalized in the next reporting period. Most of the activities mentioned in the Strategy are already underway. Some of them, especially those communications and dissemination activities that involve the final products of the country activities and demonstration projects, will take place in the last reporting period of Component 3.4.

## **2.4. Basin Wide Dissemination Meeting**

Dissemination of project results and lessons-learned is an important part of Component 3.4. A considerable amount of effort has gone into planning a Basin-Wide Dissemination Meeting, "Access to water information and public participation in the Danube River Basin", scheduled for October 16-17, 2006 in Szentendre, Hungary at the REC headquarters. The Consortium proposed a plan and agenda which was commented by and discussed with the DRP and the ICPDR and now has been finalized.

This one and half-day long meeting, based on the lessons learned from Project Component 3.4 in each of the participating countries, will share relevant experiences and good practice recommendations among all Danube-basin countries (Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine).

Through the meeting, Component 3.4 will promote public participation and access to information by showing what obstacles and difficulties have been identified, how they have been overcome, and what were the practical results and best practice models achieved in each of the project countries, explaining appropriate tools and applied methodologies. Experience sharing will provide new ideas for the entire Danube Basin to promote these concepts further in each country's own national circumstances.

Participants will include representatives of governments responsible for water management and for the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in the Danube countries, representatives of the non-governmental sector engaged in related activities at different levels, and other stakeholders or experts who have good experience in a relevant topic or in a relevant aspect of a topic discussed during the meeting. ICPDR Public Participation Experts from all Danube countries will be invited (if not already included in the group mentioned above), as well as representatives of the DRP, of ICPDR, and – as appropriate - of the European Commission.

Key lessons-learned that are common to all or most participating countries in the project will be distilled before the workshop, and based on this, conclusions and practical recommendations will be presented and debated during the workshop.

The format will be an interactive, 'give and take' workshop, with three opportunities for parallel smaller group sessions (two on the first day and one on the second day of the workshop), followed in each case by reporting back to the plenary workshop. This would allow in-depth discussion of from 6 to 8 key recommendations, with ample opportunities for project participants to share and discuss their experience and wisdom with the broader group of workshop participants.

The use of professional facilitator/s for plenary sessions will allow the Consortium, ICPDR and DRP to fully participate in the discussions, each providing input from their specific perspective.

The final session will discuss the summary conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the break out groups.

The results of the workshop will include summary conclusions and recommendations for all Danube countries that can also be discussed and used as input to the ICPDR Public Participation Expert Group which will have its meeting back-to-back with the Dissemination Workshop in the afternoon of the second day.

During that same time period after the end of the main workshop, a separate special session is planned for the participants from project component 3.4 about how to make the project results sustainable by securing national commitment and discussing specific follow-on tasks.

Although the full scope of lessons from component 3.4 will not be available until late summer (or September) based on which the exact recommendations can be developed, the Consortium provided ICPDR and DRP a preliminary list of topics for recommendations. These topics will be further specified in the summer and discussed with DRP and ICPDR.

## **2.5. Last steering committee meeting**

The third and last Steering Committee (SC) meeting is planned to take place during the October 16-17, 2006 Danube Basin Wide Dissemination Meeting, most probably during the afternoon of the first day. The invitations to the SC meeting will be sent out together with the invitation to the Basin Wide Meeting, which will be attended by the representatives of all project countries, DEF, DRP, ICPDR and the Consortium.

The objectives of the meeting will be to:

- > review and discuss the overall progress of the project component to date;
- > inform the Steering Committee about the achievements of the country activities and demonstration projects in the past 6 months;
- > present and discuss activities planned until the closure of the project component including the final report;
- > present the Communications Strategy for the dissemination of results and the lessons learned of the project component;
- > provide and discuss plans for the sustainability of project results and possible follow up plans for the period after the project component has ended.

The draft agenda will be proposed to the DRP and ICPDR at the beginning of September, and after discussion and agreement will be sent out to the country Heads of Delegations, DEF, ICPDR and DRP.

## **2.6. Final report on the project**

Following the Basin-Wide Dissemination Meeting, the Consortium will consolidate the experience gained in the implementation of the project and all its parts (country activities and demonstration projects as well as the various national and plenary meetings), along with additional thoughts gained in the Basin-Wide Dissemination Meeting. This will form the basis for our final report which will memorialize lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for on-going implementation of the principles of the project.

## 2.7. Work plan and suggested changes

This work plan lists activities for the entire duration of the project. Activities completed so far have been marked with \*\*. Changes of dates, most of them pertaining to the last 6 month period of the project, June 2006 – December 2006 (compared with the work plan as provided in the first progress report of 15 July 2005 and subsequently adapted in following progress reports), have been highlighted.

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
<b>SELECTION AND HIRING OF NATIONAL CONSULTANTS:</b>		
Feedback on draft TOR	DRP	23 November 2004 **
Finalized TOR	Consultant	30 November 2004 **
Collection of CVs and proposal on selected experts to DRP	Consultant	5-10 December 2004 **
Approval of nominated experts	DRP/ICPDR	A week after submission **
Contracting of experts	Consultant	Upon approval **
<b>ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL TEAMS:</b>		
Serbia and Montenegro national workshop	Consultant	12 October 2004 **
Bosnia and Herzegovina national workshop	Consultant	14 October 2004 **
Croatia national workshop	Consultant	22 October 2004 **
Romania national workshop	Consultant	16 November 2004 **
Bulgaria national workshop	Consultant	26 November 2004 **
Letters to key institutions with workshop minutes and requests for nominations	Consultant	1-22 December 2004 **
Nominations of members for national and operational teams	Stakeholder organizations	31 December 2004-January 31 2005 **
<b>NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS:</b>		
Feedback on draft NA outline	DRP	23 November 2004 **
Submission of draft questionnaire	Consultant	5 December 2004 **
Feedback on draft questionnaire	DRP	15 December 2004 **
Finalized NA outline	Consultant	5 December 2004 **
Finalized outline	Consultant	10 December 2004 **
Guidance for local experts	Consultant	December 2004 **
Draft NA reports, BG, SiM	Consultant	31 January 2005 **
Draft NA reports, HR, RO and BiH	Consultant	15 February 2005 **
Translation, distribution, national consultations	Consultant	February, mid- to end of March 2005 **
Final Needs Assessment Reports	Consultant	31 March 2005 – 1 <sup>st</sup> week of June 2005 **
<b>INCEPTION REPORT:</b>		
Draft Report	Consultant	17 December 2004 **
Feedback from DRP	DRP	January 7, 2005 **
Final Report	Consultant	End of second week of January 2005 **
<b>ICPDR ASSESSMENT:</b>		
Draft review and analysis of models for Observers and PP	Consultant	31 December 2004 **
Feedback from ICPDR on draft	ICPDR	January 13, 2005 **
Draft observer questionnaire	Consultant	1 December 2004 **
Feedback from ICPDR on draft observer questionnaire	ICPDR	17 December 2004 **
Final draft paper on PP models with recommendations to the ICPDR	Consultant (NYU)	27 February 2005 **
Draft ICPDR assessment of access to information mechanisms	Consultant (RFF)	31 December 2004 **

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Final ICPDR assessment of access to information mechanisms	Consultant	20 February 2005 **
Final design of reform measures for ICPDR	Consultant	No longer required by ICPDR
Assistance to ICPDR in implementing recommendations on access to information and observer/PP models	Consultant/ICPDR	No longer required by ICPDR
<b>FINALIZATION OF LOGFRAME AND INDICATORS:</b>		
Comments on TOR for TA	Consultant	26 November 2004 **
Feedback from DRP	DRP	10 December 2004 **
Start of cooperation with TA	Consultant, DRP	January 2005 **
Methodology for indicator development and other TA planned	Consultant, NHL	15 January 2005 **
Draft logframe with outcomes and outputs	Consultant, NHL	24 May 2005 **
Completed logframe and indicators	Consultant	January 2006 **
<b>LOCAL DEMONSTRATION SITES:</b>		
Selection criteria and a concrete proposal for selection, planning and implementation process	Consultant	Inception Report **
Feedback on selection criteria and processes	DRP	15 January 2005 **
Review of potential hot spots and project ideas	Consultant	29 February 2005 **
Discussion at national workshops	Consultant	February and April 2005 **
Submission of proposals to 3.4 SC	Consultant	April 2005 **
Selection of local sites and demonstration projects	3.4 SC	April-June 2005 **
Draft TORs for local experts	Consultant	July 2005 **
Feedback on TORs	DRP	July 2005 **
Contract local experts	Consultant	July 2005 (Upon approval) **
Implementation Plans for demonstration projects	Consultant	September 2005 **
Start of demonstration projects	Consultant	October / November 2005 **
Capacity building workshops at local sites	Consultant	October / November 2005 – September 2006 (on an ongoing basis)
Technical Assistance to demonstration projects	Consultant	October / November 2005 – September 2006 (on an ongoing basis)
End of demonstration projects	Consultant	September 2006
Preliminary overview of lessons learned from demo projects (ready for Basin Wide Dissemination Meeting)		September 2006
Final lessons learned from demonstration projects (to be part of final report)	Consultant	October -November 2006
<b>MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS:</b>		
Plan/prepare for first set National Workshops	Consultant	January-February 2005 **
National workshops—first set	Consultant	February-April 2005 **
Plan/prepare for second set National Workshops	Consultant	January-February 2006
National workshop—second set	Consultant	March – April 2006
Plan/prepare for First Plenary Meetings	Consultant	March-April 2005 **
Regional Plenary Meetings—First	Consultant	25-26 April 2005 **
Plan/Prepare for Second Plenary Meetings	Consultant	September-October 2005 **
Regional Plenary Meeting -- Second	Consultant	5, 6 December 2005 **
List of objectives for Basin Wide Dissemination Meeting for discussion with DRP/ICPDR	Consultant	February 2006 **
Plan/Prepare for Basin Wide Dissemination Meeting	Consultant	September 2006
Basin Wide Dissemination Meeting	Consultant	16-17 October 2006
3.4 Steering Committee Meeting—first	Consultant/DRP	27 April 2005 **
3.4 Steering Committee Meeting—second	Consultant/DRP	March 2006 **
3.4 Steering Committee Meeting—Final	Consultant/DRP	16 or 17 October 2006

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	P	
Kick-off Meeting of Project Partners/DRP	Consultant/DRP	November 2004 **
Meeting of Project Partners	Consultant	28 April 2005 **
Meeting of Project Partners	Consultant/DRP/ICPDR	7 December 2005 **
Meeting of Project Partners/ICPDR/DRP, as needed	Consultant/DRP/ICPDR	16 or 17 October 2006
<b>STUDY TOURS:</b>		
Selection of participants for U.S. and EU Study Tours	Consultant/National Teams	February 2005 and September 2005 **
DRP feedback on participants	DRP	February 2005 and September 2005 **
Final agenda for U.S. Study Tour	Consultant	15 June 2005 **
U.S. Study Tour	Consultant	11-24 June 2005 **
Draft agenda for EU Study Tour	Consultant	October 2005 **
DRP/ICPDR Comments on agenda	DRP	October 2005 **
Final agenda for EU Study Tour	Consultant	October 2005 **
EU Study Tour	Consultant	November 2005 **
U.S. Study Tour lessons learned reports	Country teams	September 2005 **
EU Study Tour lessons learned report	Country teams	January 2006 **
<b>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE / CAPACITY BUILDING:</b>		
Technical assistance to national teams as needed	Consultant	September 2005-September 2006 on an ongoing basis
Report on design of national capacity building activities	Consultant	Second progress report **
Practical Work Products (e.g., Best Practices Materials)	Consultant	To be determined based on needs identified in national workshops and regional plenary meetings **
Practical work products completed	Consultant	October 2006
<b>NATIONAL MEASURES / PRODUCTS:</b>		
Identification of measures/products	National teams/Consultants	February-March 2005, in national workshops **
Preliminary design of measures/products	National teams/Consultants	30 June 2005 **
TORs for local consultants	Consultants	Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro: December 2005 **  Bosnia and Herzegovina: January, February 2006 **
Local consultants contracted	Consultants	Serbia and Montenegro: December 2005 **  Bosnia and Herzegovina: February 2006 **  Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania: January-February 2006**
Draft measures/products	National teams/Consultants	September 2006
Final measures/products	National teams/Consultants	November 2006
Lessons learned from the national activities (to be part of final report)	National teams/Consultants	October/November 2006
<b>DISSEMINATION:</b>		
Draft dissemination / communications plan	Consultant	May 2006
Final dissemination / communications plan	Consultant	September / October 2006
Dissemination of project products	Consultant	Ongoing

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
<b>WEBSITE:</b>		
Project website established	Consultant	November 2004 **
Closed project website open for participants	Consultant	February 2006 **
Posting of project products (including background materials), articles and periodic updates	Consultant	November 2004-December 2006
<b>FINAL REPORT / LESSONS LEARNED:</b>		
Draft Final Report (including lessons learned from national activities and demonstration projects, recommendations based on lessons learned and best practices)	Consultant	November 2006
Final Report	Consultant	December 2006
<b>REPORTING:</b>		
First 6-month report	Consultant	15 July 2005 **
Second (Annual) 6-month Report	Consultant	December 2005 **
Third 6-month report	Consultant	July 2006 **
Fourth 6-month report (part of final report)	Consultant	December 2006
External mid-term evaluation	Indep. Contractor	December 2005
<b>ARTICLES:</b>		
Draft articles	Consultant	Ongoing
Finalize/begin to place articles for publication	Consultant	Ongoing



## 3. FINANCIAL REPORTING

### 3.1. Explanation of financial report

The spending of the project budget is according to the plans. (See excel spreadsheets containing the financial report is sent as separate file along with this document as an Annex.)

As the Consortium reported in the first and second progress report, during the finalization process of the country activities it became apparent that in order to ensure an appropriate impact of the project activities, the reallocation of 49.897 USD were proposed from the item local consultancy to direct costs so country activities can be implemented according to the proposals by the country partners. The request was approved by the DRP based on more detailed information provided about the reallocation.

An amount of 30,000 USD is reserved for the last Basin wide dissemination workshop which is allocated in the budget under the item regional workshops.

The Project Manager also informed the Steering Committee on its meeting on March 13, 2006 about the status of financial issues related to the project, the status of budget spending and the proposed reallocations from the item local consultancy to direct costs so country activities can be implemented according to the proposals by the country partners. The Financial Report was approved by the Steering Committee.

**ANNEX:** Financial report (a separate document sent as a separate file)