

**2nd PROGRESS REPORT ON COMPONENT 3.4 DANUBE
REGIONAL PROJECT**

ENHANCING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION MAKING
IN
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CROATIA, ROMANIA,
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

DECEMBER 2005



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 trans boundary cooperation and river basin management in the context of the Water Framework Directive.

Report prepared by



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-July through mid December 2005 (the previous report was completed in mid-July 2005). In this five-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:

- ✓ managed the preparation and initiation of country activity plans in each of the five countries;
- ✓ managed the preparation and initiation of demonstration (pilot) projects in each of the five countries;
- ✓ completed a second Study Tour (this time to the Netherlands to learn about European experience);
- ✓ conducted a regional (plenary) meeting involving all of the countries;
- ✓ initiated various activities for communication and dissemination of the results of the project; 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 five months since July 15, 2005 when the first progress report was filed. It does not deal with those activities which have been already covered in the Inception report submitted in December 2004 or the first 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, results achieved in the past five months of the project.

The second part of the report describes the activities that will be undertaken in the next 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 a financial report for the period of June 1, 2005 and October 31, 2005, and a request for budget reallocation by the Consortium after consideration of the proposed country activities to be carried out by the project countries.

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1. Activities over the past 6 months

1.1 Country Plans for all countries

The Inception Report and the 1st Progress Report explain in detail the purpose of the country activity plans. Since the date of the inception report, the process described there has been completed.

The purpose of this section is to provide brief information about the preparation of the country activity plans and how they connect with the Needs Assessments prepared earlier in the project and the outcome of the national workshops (discussed in the Inception Report and the 1st Progress Report) and with the Demonstration Projects, which are discussed below.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria will accomplish four main activities:

1. Assess and improve the rules and regulations for confidentiality of environmental and water related information

This will start with an assessment to find out the current situation for water related confidentiality issues in Bulgaria and a comparison with some EU practices.

A Working Group of officials and NGO experts will be created to discuss and develop proposals. Based on the assessment described above, a guidance material including a set of recommendations for improvements in the current situation will be drafted.

The recommendations, which could include proposals to amend existing legislation, will be discussed with a wide range of stakeholders including representatives of interested and affected businesses, and relevant government officials.

Capacity building workshops for officials will be organized to present and discuss practices in EU Member States on access to environmental information and their potential application in Bulgaria. Guidance materials on how to address the issue of confidentiality in environmental information provision will be drafted. The purpose of the guidance material is to provide recommendations to officials, individuals and organizations on how to act when access to information is denied on confidentiality grounds. Feedback about the preliminary draft guidance material will be obtained during the 2nd National Workshop.

2. Training and capacity building for authorities

As a first step, good practices and failures to implement the existing procedures for active/passive access to information will be identified with special focus on water related environmental information. During the training the officials will gain information about the identified techniques and options to improve practice.

In addition, a report for promotion of good practices and recommendations will be prepared. This list of good practices and recommendations will be part of the guidance material mentioned under activity 1 (the guidance document will contain the outputs from Activities 1 and 2). The report will also contain the training materials and discussion topics of the capacity building workshop.

3. Enhancing the active dissemination of information on environment and water through the web page

A new, more user-friendly web page for the River Basin Directorate that is responsible for the Danube river basin in Bulgaria will be developed and possible improvements and/or changes in the other relevant web pages will be made. The web page will also contain online material in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQ). (This activity will be done in close cooperation with an ongoing German twinning project in order to avoid redundancy and take advantage of synergies.)

Additionally, easy to understand guidance material on access to information will be developed in web format and posted on this website.

4. Brochure for NGOs and the general public

The plain language brochure will be targeted at NGOs and the general public and will contain details on how to access and where to find environmental and specifically water related information. Opinions will be obtained from experts and NGOs on the draft text and the text will be discussed in a roundtable meeting format to obtain a wide range of views and suggestions for improvements before it is finalized.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina will accomplish three main activities:

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

In this activity, participants will draft procedures for implementing rights and duties concerning access to information and public participation to be part of mandatory bylaws to the new Water Law. When developing the bylaws, knowledge obtained about best practices of public involvement will be used.

2. Contribution to the development of Water Data Base

Project participants will assess the existing situation of available information and data collected by various responsible authorities. The assessment includes finding out which authority collects what information and how that information can be accessed. Based on the findings of this inquiry, a basic information system (database) will be developed and discussed with the governmental officials, experts and NGOs. The goal of the database is to facilitate access to information for the public, in part by identifying which are the authorities holding this information and the ways of accessing the information. In addition to

improving current practices, the activities will serve as starting point to start discussions on developing a more ambitious database in a future project.

3. Guideline/manual for authorities

The manual will help improve the currently differing abilities and skills among authorities in terms of how they manage and handle access to information and public participation. It will focus specially on officials on the municipal level and provide an overview of legal requirements as well as practical advice on how to deal with access to information and public participation issues in the context of water. It will explain how to conduct various kinds of public involvement procedures, answer information requests, and actively disseminate information, and what are the possibilities for access to justice should the rights not be implemented correctly. The manual can also be used by a variety of stakeholders and gives them an overview of their rights and how to practice them.

The manual will be drafted by experts and discussed in working groups and roundtable meetings as well as in the 2nd national workshop.

NGOs led by DEF will organize a workshop to assess community needs with regard to drinking and bathing water information. Based on the findings, NGOs will provide input to the manual for officials on the issues of format, style and content of active/passive information dissemination. NGOs also anticipate providing input with regard to confidentiality issues.

4. NGO brochure on access to information

An informational brochure or leaflet for NGOs will also be drafted. The brochure should help NGOs to assist the public to find water-related information sources, and to increase their capacity to interpret the data provided by authorities. Overall, these measures will help NGOs participate more effectively in the decision making procedure for water-related issues.

Croatia

Croatia will accomplish three main activities:

1. Developing a water information Protocol

Croatian participants will create a "Protocol" (a legally binding instrument) whose purpose is to define requirements for authorities in the water sector on how to organize their internal procedures and activities to improve their ability to carry out their obligations to provide public access to water related information and to disseminate information. Croatia is the only of the countries contemplating a legally binding instrument.

The basis for the proposed Protocol is previous analyses of the situation in EU countries and in Croatia as examined by experts and discussed by a working group of officials, experts and NGOs as well as in the second national workshop. The draft protocol will be finalized only after seeking and responding to comments. It is anticipated that a new model based on the Protocol will be presented and used during the trainings outlined in activity 3. The Protocol will

be accompanied by a set of non-binding examples and practical advice, somewhat like the manual or desk-book that is contemplated in the other countries.

2. Brochure on Access to Water Information (for the general public and NGOs)

A brochure will be created, targeted for the public and environmental NGOs, to help them more easily find information about water. It will contain an overview of relevant laws, conventions, regulations and references to web pages, as well as explanations of the rights of the public regarding public access to information. Information will be supplemented with cases and practical examples, a tool kit on how to participate in decision-making processes, how to write requests, and other critical information, and other means to support the role and opportunities of civil society representatives.

The brochure will be drafted by NGOs (under the leadership of DEF), discussed in broader circles among interested NGOs, and presented to the public in spring 2006.

3. Training program/materials to build institutional capacity building for public officials and relevant stakeholders

Two 2-days trainings will be focused on practical knowledge about the process of providing water related information. The training will address relevant procedures, obligations and rights for state officials, as well as acquaint them with international experiences and best practices.

Romania

Romania will accomplish three main activities:

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

The activity starts with an assessment on how RBCs are currently functioning with regard to communication, information dissemination and public participation. The next step is to identify and share good practice examples of RBCs and develop draft recommendations and solutions for the RBCs to improve their work with regard to access to information and public participation.

Based on identified needs and priorities, a capacity building training for the RBCs will be conducted.

2. Development of manual for authorities

The manual is meant to provide guidance to government officials with regard to the rules on public access to water related information. The manual will also be used to share good practices of public involvement in water related decision making. The draft will be written by country consultants and discussed with relevant stakeholders during the 2nd National Meeting in April.

3. Development of Brochure for wider public and NGOs

The brochure will provide information for the wider public and NGOs on where/what/how information on water related issues can be accessed and how the public can be part of the decision making process. The draft will be discussed during the 2nd National Meeting. Experience obtained under the issues identified under activity 1 and during the demonstration project will also be integrated into the brochure.

Serbia and Montenegro

Serbia and Montenegro will accomplish 4 main activities:

1. Development of Manual for Officials

The manual will focus on access to environmental and water related information for the representatives of the public authorities, emphasizing new legislation, relevant international agreements and other relevant EU legislation. It will also provide advice on practical implementation, including good examples. It will cover a wide range of subjects, including legal framework, actions to facilitate requests for environmental and water-related information (procedures to log, route and file requests, guidance for answering various kinds of often-repeated information requests, fees, fee waivers and fee reductions, and appeals) and active dissemination of information (methods and tools). The draft will be discussed by a working group of officials and NGOs in the 2nd national workshop.

2. Development of a Brochure for NGO and Public

This product will be a plain language summary of the information on access to water related information provided in the manual (activity 1), adapted for the wider public and NGOs, focusing on their perspective. It will use easily understandable language and an attractive, accessible format. The draft will be discussed and revised as necessary during the capacity building workshop for NGOs (activity 4).

3. Capacity Building workshops for officials

Two 2-day capacity building workshops are planned to present the draft manual for officials and collect their input, suggestions and feedback to improve the final draft, as well as to present the new laws and draft laws related to environmental and water related information and especially their practical implementation. The capacity building should increase the chances that authorities will use the materials in their daily jobs.

4. Capacity Building workshop for NGOs

One capacity building workshop for NGOs is planned, possibly back-to back with a session for officials. During the workshop, the draft brochure for NGO and citizens will be presented and input and suggestions from NGOs will be collected. Also, the preliminary lessons from the Demonstration Project and good practices on sharing water related information and public participation from NGOs from Slovenia and Hungary will be presented. The workshop will also provide practical knowledge for NGOs concerning implementation of the new laws.

1.2 Demonstration Project Plans for all countries

We will not repeat previous reports to the DRP that discuss the purpose of the demonstration projects, the process for identifying appropriate locations, and the issues that will be examined in the context of the demonstrations. In this reporting period, the Consortium engaged in an intensive effort of soliciting, receiving, reviewing and refining proposals for demonstration projects from each of the five countries. The lengthy process was designed to assure that the activities fit the needs of Component 3.4, could be achieved in the time period, and would further the specific purposes of the project.

The process began when the Consortium received solicited proposals from NGOs in each of the countries. The proposals were written by those NGOs with the active assistance and involvement of the appropriate REC country office, and reflected decisions made in earlier national and regional meetings of the project. However, the proposals marked the first time that project proponents presented details about their purposes and how they proposed to achieve them.

Each of the proposals went through a number of drafts. Each was reviewed (sometimes several times) by the particular country office and by the Consortium. In some instances, we decided that the proponent's plans were too ambitious or not entirely in keeping with the purposes of the project. In an active back-and-forth, the plans were refined and made workable. The process was complicated by the five countries involved, a wide variation in skill levels, and by the Consortium's desire to keep the demonstration projects highly focused.

In general, as noted below, the common elements of the demonstration projects include: a focus on severe local pollution ("hot spots") that is not currently well documented or understood in their communities; various devices to increase information about the pollution and their sources and to share that information within the communities, including creation of data bases, roundtable discussions and meetings, capacity building and training; and connections with media and other tools for dissemination and raised public awareness. All of the proponents of the demonstration projects seek to take what they have learned and share it within broader groups in their countries, to assure that the lessons inform future public policy. Another set of goals is to ensure strong and effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention, the EU Water Framework Directive and other EU directives on access to information and public participation. This will increase access to information on local hot spots and help to empower citizens to meaningfully participate in the WFD planning process with respect to their own geographic area.

BOR, SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO: Managed By Ngo Association Of Young Researchers Bor, Toplica Marjanovic (Project Leader)

This demonstration project focuses on the pollution to the Bor and Krivelj Rivers from Bor, an industrial center in east Serbia. The pollution sources are industrial discharges from mining and metallurgy that leaches from pits, some of which also contaminate ground water, and domestic sewage. Bor has no wastewater

treatment. Despite adoption of various action plans, little progress has been made toward improving water quality.

The project aims to increase public information about wastewater problems and bring about a greater likelihood of public participation to solve these problems. It does this through a series of activities including stakeholder identification, capacity building, NGO networking and training, roundtables and other kinds of outreach to the general public. The project will work to improve the skills and capacity of local authorities in collecting and disseminating water related information. The steps to achieve this include:

- Initial meetings with relevant organizations and institutions, followed by a roundtable format to assess the interests of participants, their expectations, and their current sources (if any) of information on water issues in the region;
- Priority setting for public information access and distribution and development of public information materials;
- On-going efforts toward developing media coverage;
- Creating and facilitating the operation of collection points for gathering, processing, and distributing information about water issues to the public, building on previous projects; special attention will be paid to the competence of municipal authorities to take an active role in collection and maintenance of information;
- Creating a database of information on wastewater and drinking water information to increase the level of public information about environmental problems;
- Establishing a dedicated network through mailing lists, discussion forums, and the web to facilitate maximum information exchange between interested parties in regions affected by the Bor pollution and with other regions facing similar problems; and
- Training local authorities for regional and national level implementation of Water Framework Directive and the Aarhus Convention (the demonstration project will not hold extra training sessions, but would like to send officials for training that is held pursuant to the Serbian country activities).

The anticipated results are increased awareness, electronic networking, improved capacities of NGOs and local authority to apply for and respond to access to information requests respectively, and the development of concrete methods and procedures for securing public access to information.

It is hoped that the lessons learned in this experience can be transferred to other municipalities facing similar problems, so that access to information and the public participation components of the WFD and AC are well incorporated into Serbia and Montenegro practice.

TIRGU MURES, ROMANIA: Managed By Focus Eco Center, Zoltan Hajdu (Project Leader)

This demonstration project seeks to improve the flow of information and public involvement in water management by building the capacity of diverse interest groups. The specific focus is the Mures River Basin and the city of Tirgu Mures, which are severely impacted by pollution from industrial plants and agricultural

and rural runoff, including artificial fertilizers and residue from pig farms in Gornesti. Tirgu Mures' own Reghin water treatment station also contributes to the problem. Residents in Tirgu Mures and Iernut get their drinking water from the river and rural areas of the basin use wells that draw from contaminated groundwater. The cost of drinking water in Tirgu Mures is one of the highest in Romania because of the cost of purifying the water.

The Mures River Basin is also a technical pilot area for Romanian implementation of the WFD. Although relevant decision-making is done in accordance with Romanian legislation, public participation and access to information are deficient, a problem that has been noted by the NGO community who have expressed concerns about selection time and consultation. Romania's likely 2007 accession to the EU suggests the significant need for fine-tuning and improving the public participation and access to information components so as to ensure compliance with the WFD.

This project will create a better integrated model for NGO participation in river basin committees (RBCs) throughout Romania based on improvements tested in the Mures RBC. It will improve public information dissemination about environmental pollution, including specific information about discharge points, diffuse pollution sources, levels and types of pollutants, and the effects of pollution on environmental and human health.

The specific activities will include:

- Collection of information about EU water management best practices, about how the Mures RBC actually works, and distribution of this information to relevant stakeholders;
- Using persuasion and proposals made to the RBC to improve NGO selection criteria and recommend alternative procedures. To facilitate this, a guide entitled "How to work together," will be created describing best practices in integrated water management based on successful case studies;
- Training of NGOs and water authorities on effective WFD public participation procedures by means of workshops and other means (separate financing will be obtained for parallel workshops concerning technical implementation of the WFD); and
- Actively informing and involving NGOs and the public. This will be facilitated by the creation of a database of affected parties (including a variety of NGOs, CBOs, small communities, private companies, etc.). Groups will be encouraged to participate in information dissemination and take an active role in the decision-making processes, particularly with regard to future NGO representation on RBCs. Special attention will be paid to the Niraj River basin (a sub-basin of the Mures River), where stakeholders are in the process of working out water management plans. Awareness raising will include an event on Water Day 2006.

Several results are anticipated: (1) a network of stakeholders, particularly from the NGO sector, with an interest in water basin management; (2) the development and testing of a better model of public engagement and NGO selection for participation in RBCs; (3) capacity building for NGOs and civil servants to make them more effective in transparent water management,

accessible information, and efficient public participation; and (4) testing and sharing of good practices that can provide a model for possible use in the other 10 Romanian river basins.

Osijek Water Forum, Croatia , managed by Green Osijek Ecological Association, Jasmin Sadikovic (Project Leader)
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In Osijek, Croatia, untreated wastewater is pumped daily directly into the River Drava. There has been discussion of building a treatment plant, but no clear plans have emerged, a fact that is a source of some concern for Osijek residents. Cepin, nearby, has an oil factory that, before 2002, pumped its wastewater into drainage canals, impacting local agricultural production and drinking water. This was reformed when Green Osijek alerted the local and national media. However, current information on oil company practices is not publicly available, and the reforms gained through the intervention of Green Osijek didn't include resolving the larger structural problem in the form of widespread lack of wastewater management, civic transparency, and public participation in environmental decision-making in the region.

The demonstration project will address the need for improvement in access to information and public participation as follows:

- Establish a transparent and efficient planning process for decisionmaking about the construction and operation of a wastewater treatment plant, including effective ways to monitor and control pollution in the Drava River;
- Support the harmonization of Croatia's water laws with the Water Framework Directive including provisions that require informing the public, and in the drafting and implementation of river basin management plans and future programs;
- Promote implementation of Aarhus-consistent legislation that ensures access to environmental information and moves Croatia further towards the Convention's ratification.

The specific activities will include:

- Establishing an Osijek Water Forum to build a basis and mechanisms for public involvement and information sharing, beginning with three roundtables with identified stakeholders. Participants would include state institutions responsible for water management issues, local government, private sector representatives (including the Cepin Oil Factory), environmental NGO's and educational institutions. On the local level, the Water Forum could ensure public participation as aimed for in the WFD and the Aarhus Convention.
- Establish and finalize protocols of conduct for Forum activities, including activities to ensure effective use of the possibilities for participation available under the WFD and the Aarhus Convention, with the approval of stakeholders and the responsible water authorities. It is expected that the Forum will grow to become a permanent platform for Osijek regional communication about water issues. Green Osijek will facilitate between interest groups until a permanent secretariat can be developed;

- Develop public outreach in the form of a poster prepared by Green Osijek and local authorities to raise awareness about existing pollution problems in the area, possible solutions (including the need for a wastewater treatment plant) and awareness about where information can be found regarding these issues and the rights the public has to obtain certain information under the WFD, other EU directives and the Aarhus Convention. The poster will be disseminated to public institutions, schools, NGOs and similar interested institutions and bodies. It is designed to spur public interest and potential involvement in water management issues;
- Media outreach to increase public understanding of the Water Forum project, facilitated by Dalibor Radman, a journalist from the *Glas Slavonije*, a daily newspaper in the region; and
- Increase local awareness by connecting local activities with International Water Day (March 22, 2006); undertake a "street action" including a kiosk/panel displaying promotional project and water-related materials. Citizens will receive information on how to save water, facts and figures on communal water, examples of good European practice, and how and where to access information. A variety of water-related institutions would be asked to make presentations, describing their work and role in water management, problems and possible solutions.

The anticipated results include enhanced public participation in the decision-making process through the establishment of a functional Water Forum to assure discussion and communication on essential water issues; public education and access to water-related environmental information; better information about the role of a waste water treatment plant; and concrete steps toward achieving the goals set out in the three pillars of Aarhus Convention and the Water Framework Directive's goal to improve Europe's waters by 2015.

Lovech & Troyan Counties, Bulgaria: managed by Association for Useful Activities "Ecomission 21 Century," Nelly Miteva (Project Leader)

The Osam River, which travels through Lovech and Troyan Counties, is the most polluted in Bulgaria. While industry is not the only cause of pollution, it is believed that Lesoplast Plant, which operates without an IPPC permit, contributes significantly to the problem. Another plant contributing to the pollution, Actavis in Troyan, has recently been issued a permit but the public has not been informed of the conditions and effects of this permit. There is little public understanding of the sources of pollution and how to manage them.

The project seeks to address these problems through assessment, awareness raising, and capacity building. The steps to achieve this include:

- Identifying barriers to access to environmental information that exist despite the fact that the Bulgarian Law for Access to Information has been in operation since 2000. Preliminary assessment would identify gaps in how the law is implemented at the local level and suggest improvements. Workshops will be conducted to help NGOs understand how to access information, and improve the capacity of local authorities to respond to requests;
- Improving public participation by improving access procedures and informing the public of water-related concerns

The steps to achieve this include:

- Conduct a preliminary assessment by making a request for information to the Municipalities of Lovech and Troyan, the Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water-Pleven and the Danube River Basin Directorate, and the Regional Inspectorate of the Protection and Control of Human Health; request would seeking data on water quality and human health, pollution sources and risks, a copy of the IPPC permit of Actavis and information on the monitoring of fulfilling permit requirements;
- Conduct a workshop, which would include representatives of the appropriate country governments and water authorities, to discuss the current state of access to information based on the trial access request, and discuss and formulate suggestions for improvement, leading to a draft proposal for improvement;
- Conduct a second access request to test improvements, followed by another workshop to formalize proposed changes. Details on results will be distributed via CDs to other municipalities, and through internet networks and a brochure; and
- Public outreach and communication to assure that data concerning water quality, human health, and access difficulties will be communicated to the public, using media coverage to increase awareness of water issues facing communities.

This project will propose concrete steps to improve the Bulgarian Law for Access to Information, and related capacity building. It hopes to improve communication between NGOs and governments. Local governments will be encouraged to improve their mechanisms for public participation, and the resulting good practices and proposals for transparent water management and access to information will be presented at the national level for use in other counties and water basins.

BOSNIA (LUKAVAC CITY): Managed By Ecological Association Of Citizens "Eko-Zeleni" Lukavac, Husejin Keran (Project Leader)
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Modrac Lake, an artificial lake fed by the Spreča and Turija Rivers, is polluted by untreated waste from several Lukavac City industrial sites and domestic sewage from surrounding villages. The lake also receives pollution from untreated waste sent from the city of Spreča to the Spreča River. Modrac Lake is the source of drinking water for Lukavac residents. When the Spreča River floods (sometimes combining flood water with Modrac Lake water), drinking water for the surrounding villages is also contaminated. The local municipalities and other relevant authorities do not have an adequate or accurate overview of what pollutants are present in the river, lake, and drinking water, or a clear picture of what additional information would be useful to understand the impacts of water contamination, including the effects of pollution on flora, fauna, and human health.

This project aims to:

- Stimulate and facilitate cooperation among stakeholders to work together and to map existing and missing water related information;

- Assess what information is available from authorities and stakeholders with regard to water issues in the Lukavac area, establish a system for the exchange of water-related information between authorities, and develop a plan whereby such information can be made available (both actively and passively) to citizens; and
- Improve citizens' participation in water-related decision-making, in part by stimulating a dialogue that could bring about possible solutions to such problems as water quality.

The steps to achieve this include:

- Assess the situation through interviews with relevant authorities (including sessions in which the public will be able to attend and ask questions); a series of questionnaires posed to local residents to determine their interest in acquiring water-related information and their level of current participation in environmental decision-making; and a roundtable with relevant parties to discuss the findings of interviews and the questionnaire and brainstorm about possible solutions;
- Identify and consider best practices in other countries;
- Consider whether training for government workers on access to information provisions will improve the situation;
- If authorities agree, sample and analyze Speča River water to determine how polluted it is according to national categories (1 to 4). If acceptable, this would result in following steps -- categorization of the river to help citizens, NGOs, industry, and government understand the implications of the sampling results according to BiH law; and workshops to inform all relevant parties of results obtained, and to assist authorities on how to process information and make it available to citizens;
- Discuss and if possible implement, changes in information dissemination, also using a workshop format;
- Make findings of all three activities available to the public through reports disseminated to the media and through the web and other information dissemination methods; and
- Raise public awareness through information dissemination of the outcomes of discussions, capacity building, proposed possible changes, and the river analysis, particularly through use of a brochure.

It is hoped that the results of these activities will facilitate change through collaborative means, as a result of enhanced information and information provided to the public.

1.3 Second Regional workshop

A second regional workshop took place on 5 and 6 December 2005 in Novi Sad (Serbia and Montenegro). The agenda for the workshop can be found in the Annex. The goals of the workshop were to:

- build the capacities of the Danube country officials and NGOs and assist them to address common barriers and problems identified in the Needs Assessments and during national workshops;
- assist the country partners to carry out the activities defined in the country activity plans;

- provide opportunities for the participants from the project countries to share their experience and to learn from the experience of other EU countries;
- discuss how synergies can be built between the demonstration projects and the country activities; and
- review the progress of the project to date and shape future activities.

The meeting started with a session in which the Consortium provided updates on Component 3.4 progress and ICPDR and DRP provided updates on their public participation and communications activities. After the introductory session, representatives of each of the five country teams presented their country activities and demonstration projects, followed by questions and discussion. Special attention was given to synergies between the country activities and the demonstration projects and to how the Consortium could provide targeted assistance to both country activities and demonstration projects.

Two types of activities have been initiated in (almost) all of the five countries: preparation of a manual for government officials on how to assure smooth functioning of access to information (either as guidance, or in the case of Croatia, a legally binding document), and a brochure for NGOs and/or the wider public on how to obtain information. Most of the country teams had prepared draft outlines for manuals and brochures which were shared during the meeting. The second half of the first day of the regional meeting was dedicated to working on these drafts. The participants split into smaller groups -- government members of the country teams worked on their respective draft manuals (sometimes called desk-books because it is hoped they will be kept on the desks of government employees so that they will be working reference materials), while the NGO representatives of all five countries joined forces to share ideas and work on brochures. The results of the groups were presented and discussed the next day.

After this discussion, examples of how to ensure and promote public participation and/or stakeholder involvement in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) were presented and discussed:

- public participation/stakeholder involvement in the Krka Pilot project in Slovenia,
- best public participation practices within the EU CARDS project in the Sava river basin, and
- examples from Bulgaria and Romania on how River Basin Committees and Directorates can function as vehicles for public involvement under the EU WFD.

Following this plenary session, the participants could choose to attend one of two parallel working groups on specific topics: (a) confidentiality of environment and water-related information or (b) how to work with communications and media to support project activities. The working group on confidentiality started with two presentations, one on the current situation in Bulgaria and one on practices in The Netherlands, followed by a discussion in which participants shared experiences and difficulties encountered when dealing with the issue of confidentiality. In the communications working group, the participants worked on creating a draft communications strategy. The results from the two working groups were shared with all participants and the second Regional Workshop

ended with conclusions and ideas on how to move forward with all activities planned.

The 43 participants in the workshop included the key members of the country's operational teams, NGOs, country consultants, experts from REC Headquarters and Country Offices, experts from NYU and RFF as well as representatives of the ICPDR and DRP, and experts from Slovenia running the Krka Pilot Project and from the EU CARDS project in Serbia.

1.4 Dutch study tour

Fifteen representatives from the five Danube countries (two government officials and one NGO representative for each country) involved in component 3.4, Magdolna Toth Nagy and Orsolya Szálasi, from the REC and Ruth Greenspan Bell from RFF came to The Netherlands, arriving October 30 and departing November 5, 2005. This section will discuss the substantive and procedural parts of the study tour, and a preliminary analysis of what was achieved during and as a result of the trip. A more detailed report, including a compilation of the impressions of the study tour participants, similar to the report about the US Study Tour, will be prepared and made available at the end of January and in the next Progress Report.

Purpose of study tour

The study tour organised in The Netherlands was designed to offer participants the opportunity to gain practical experience and knowledge with regard to the problems, obstacles, and good practices of EU WFD implementation. Special emphasis was given to access to information and public participation as well as the linkages with and practices developed during the implementation of Aarhus Convention and other EU Directives. Thus, participants were exposed to information about successful legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, and practices to promote public access to water-related information and public participation in decision-making, all with the purpose of increasing public involvement in the protection of water bodies.

Study tour design

Government and NGOs representatives attended the study tour with a fairly consistent set of expectations. They wanted to learn how The Netherlands are implementing its commitments to the Water Framework Directive and Aarhus Convention, specifically the water-related components of public participation and access to information. Participants anticipated that Dutch authorities and stakeholders would share practical examples of stakeholder selection and public consultation in environmental decision-making, approaches to River Basin Management, and technical applications of access to information laws in terms of the organization, handling and regulation of information. They also expected to get an overall picture of the interrelationships between all stakeholder groups in the Netherlands, with a particular interest in the role of government institutions, NGOs, and the public.

In earlier meetings and activities of Component 3.4 in the five countries involved, three main areas were identified which these officials and NGOs

indicated were their critical areas of interest and the expected focus for their visit. These were:

- Instruments and mechanisms used at the level of the central government for information to and communication and involvement with stakeholders
 - Current status of EU WFD implementation: main achievements and problems
 - Connection to implementation of other access to information and environmental public participation-specific legislative and procedural tools within the Netherlands (implementation of other EU directives and Aarhus Convention in practice at national level)
 - Methods/tools for information dissemination:
 - What information is provided by whom and what way?
 - How are confidentiality issues handled?
 - How the agencies are organized to deal with access and provision of information?
- Public involvement with regard to EU WFD, how to obtain and consider public comments on water management plans: good practice examples (active involvement, information, consultation)
 - What are the forms and methods applied?
 - Experiences with stakeholder forums, public discussions, meetings, hearings, etc.
- EU WFD implementation in the Scheldt River Basin, an international river basin management that includes Belgium, France and The Netherlands
 - Experience with pilot cases within EU where EU Guidance on public involvement has been tested and what have been the lessons learned
 - International and trans-boundary aspects of countries working together in an international river basin management framework.

The role of the Consortium in specific meetings:

Participants from REC and RFF escorted the study tour participants to every meeting, and participated actively to assure maximum understanding and communication, to bridge the gap between the knowledge and experience of the study tour participants and the presenters, and to facilitate communication.

Study tour results

Considerable effort was expended to assure that each session was not a "lecture," but offered opportunities for adequate interaction and maximum comprehension. Each presenter agreed that questions or comments could be made throughout the presentations, and not held to afterwards. Significant time was left for questions, comments and discussions after the 20-30 minutes presentations. As a result, the meetings were marked by frequent questions, active learning, and a lively exchange of views.

Based on the evaluations from the study tour participants, the Consortium can conclude that participants gained significant information in the areas of their interest and the main purpose of the study tour was achieved.

Overall, participants were encouraged by the study tour and left with ideas that they felt they could apply in their own countries.

In addition to generating ideas about how countries can improve access to information and public participation, the Study Tour was also designed to build the professional capacity of participants. Participants mentioned that they had gained a number of useful lessons that they could apply in their jobs. These include help in determining the appropriate technical methods and tools to involve relevant stakeholders; better understanding of how to find mutual solutions between NGOs and stakeholders to avoid conflict and increase cooperation; ideas about how to make public participation a more accessible process; the need for context-specific solutions to public participation and decision-making; the need to involve all stakeholders in order to fully identify and address problems; and finally, the need to encourage as much communication as possible between the wide variety of stakeholders and the public.

Reactions from the study tour participants:

The Consortium received very positive feedback from the study tour participants. Participants stated that they learned a great deal about a number of issues, including providing/requesting information on environmental matters, how to do a better job of organizing better public participation, how to develop general collaboration between officials and NGO in important problems, best and not so good practices, and the importance of teamwork.

Hotels and other study tour arrangements

The Study tour participants expressed satisfaction with the physical arrangements of the study tour including the hotels and venues for the various meetings.

Follow up by participants

The following is a preliminary list of ways in which participants suggested they could share information they gained as a result of the study tour with other colleagues and ensure wider dissemination of the information and knowledge gained:

- prepare reports to relevant government institutions and authorities with lessons learned, a list of available materials, and suggestions and recommendations for future activities. Another thought was to put this information on the internet.
- share the information obtained in capacity building workshops for government officials; these could be as part of upcoming events of the project and other government initiated events;
- transfer information, lessons and materials in informal exchanges with colleagues, forwarding received brochures to interested parties.
- share experience and information at stakeholders' meetings.
- hold meetings or attending regular staff meetings to present lessons learned.
- prepare presentations on the "Dutch way" to be delivered to the NGO sector and relevant authorities.
- make all received material available in local language on relevant NGO (in some cases web content will be shared between different NGO websites) and government websites.

- find ways for continuing exchanges of information with other colleagues involved in the US study tour.

In relation to how the diverse information and knowledge gained will be applied in the process of development of country products the participants suggested the following ideas:

Serbia & Montenegro

The Netherlands tour information will be incorporated into the development of the planned Manual for Officials and Brochure for NGOs and integrated into capacity building seminars for officials and NGOs at the national level.

Bulgaria

The lessons learned will be relevant to improving existing procedures for access to information (using websites, taking business concerns about confidentiality into consideration, and encouraging NGO participation in decision-making process).

The NGO representative indicated that an NGO coalition fighting for more sustainable management of rivers at the national level could be assisted by the best practices scenario presented during the tour, specifically the presentations concerning the Scheldt River Basin Directorate and flood risk protection.

Croatia

Since the Croatian environmental sector is very fragmented, the guidance material from the tour will be used to enhance internal procedures. Also tour information could aid colleagues in finishing a catalogue of information within the Ministry, discussing and drafting the proposed internal Protocol of the Water Management Directorate, and increasing public awareness through ideas gained in Holland, including using easily accessible materials such as comics and cartoons. The NGO representative suggested that the OWN best practice could be applied on a local level to the creation of the Osijek Water Forum.

Romania

Tour information will be used to raise awareness in the Northern part of the Danube Basin, and improve the functioning of River Basin Committees (focusing on communication and public involvement aspects).

Bosnia & Herzegovina

The ideas gained concerning public information and public participation will be applied as the new Water Law comes into force. Ideas associated with greater cooperation between NGOs and the government sector and well-reasoned democratic negotiation processes will be further promoted. Finally, enhancing public information through brochures, a water help desk, and the internet will be encouraged and/or considered. The NGO representative indicated that they would try to organize discussion groups on water issues in order to involve the public as much as possible, and consider including tour information in a handbook.

The Dutch Study Tour Schedule and List of Participants are found in the Annex to this report. A detailed report on the Study Tour in The Netherlands will be ready in January 2006.

1.5 Further follow up by participants on study tours

It was agreed that the participants from each country team would prepare an integrated Study Tour Report that would reflect on what was gained through the experience. The report below was prepared after the July Progress Report and summarizes participants reflections following the US Tour (a more detailed document is in the annex); a detailed summary from the Dutch tour will be part of the Progress Report filed in July 2006.

a. Useful lessons learned for government officials and actions

(1) record keeping:

- How the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and similar state and city level agencies organize and manage information and data;
- The policy and practice behind creating, handling and storing records in the EPA Records Management System.

(2) How to make records and information available to the public, actively, or on request:

- How to develop effective legal, institutional and practical methods and tools, including manuals and desk books, for providing public access to environmental information, and improving public participation in environmental decision making;
- How to determine what is key environmental information of interest to the public and NGOs, and in what format and level of detail it can be presented in order to increase public awareness and advance public involvement in the decision making process;
- Internal procedures and best practices within government agencies to respond to requests and assure more uniform responses among the various government offices at the national, regional and local level;
- Means available to streamline the request process;
- Putting information on web-pages to reduce the burden of responding to numerous specific requests.

(3) Examples of how to go about withholding legitimately confidential information.

- Legal procedures for handling confidential information, including business information; US rules for what data should/can be protected for disclosure, how to protect it (information tracking system), what to do in the case of requests for confidential data; and issues of legal liability for released confidential data;
- How government agencies on the federal, state and city level organize, manage and protect confidential business information, including good practices, marginal cases and documents that contain mixed information (some legitimately CBI, and other not);
- Why restricting access to important environmental and health information on the basis of confidentiality or national security can in some instances become very dangerous;
- The impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on information access in the US.

(4) How government agencies can communicate with the public.

- Effective means of communication with stakeholders and institutions, and practical information concerning communication with the environmental media;
- Ways to enhance public attitudes towards legislation with the goal of achieving better implementation of laws and respect for rights, laws and courts;
- Ways to develop user friendly, interactive web-based ways of reporting to the public on environmental related data;

(5) Internal organization of government agencies.

- The utility of the U.S. Federal Register to provide the public with the details of what government is contemplating doing and for obtaining feedback;
- The need in each department or ministry for a dedicated unit or at least one trained official with specific responsibility for processing information requirements (initially, with the hope of growing and adding more to respond to demand);
- The utility of establishing Public Affairs Divisions as independent units within ministries or agencies and Docket Centers with public records rooms;
- Using web based training for government employees.

b. Lessons applicable to NGOs and the larger public

- The perspectives of environmental and other NGOs (which were sometimes at odds with the government perspective), whether and how these NGOs get the information they need and want from the government, and how they use it to influence public policy.
- What NGOs do when the government denies requests for information;
- How NGOs can raise money and make their activities sustainable;
- How citizens and NGOs can reinforce the governments role in environmental enforcement;
- How NGOs can organize themselves and then grow to serve local community needs;
- The role of NGOs as facilitators of government efforts to convey environmental messages to the general public in a non-technical and understandable manner.

c. Lessons concerning cooperation between government agencies and other stakeholders (including NGOs)

- How, even when interests between NGOs and government agencies, or between NGOs, may be adversarial, they can find common ground on which to combine efforts to achieve narrow goals of mutual interests and to develop mutual trust and understanding;
- Increased understanding of the relationship between NGOs and government, including specifics of how various NGOs interact with the government; the importance and role of watchdog organizations; the importance and actual utility of public involvement in environmental projects in achieving a better public outcome; the need to transform scientific data to common language in order to develop public understanding and support and set the stage for their influence on reforms

involving specific water bodies; animating people to contribute to the safe environment; possible content of web-pages; useful links;

- How to establish teams of lawyers, scientific experts and communication professionals from NGOs, government agencies or both, to work toward the same goals (such as developing guidelines, manuals, and clear procedures regarding public access to environmental/water information) from their different perspectives, and how this creates a better understanding of the subject matter. Such teams can be long-term but also short-term and issue-specific;
- Practical examples of how efforts to protect shared water bodies are organized to manage the inherently complex problems; how to build alliances and involve the public in the implementation of complex issues such as dredging Hudson River PCBs project and managing the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

d. Other lessons learned

- How to organize web-sites in different institutions (including government, research and academic institutions and the NGO sector) and the possibilities for access to information through Internet;
- How the environmental press obtains documents and information, how it uses and disseminates that information and the different problems and opportunities in educating and informing journalists on environmental issues;
- How to develop educational materials about water-related to data in order to build public support and interest;
- Benefits from public participation are mutual throughout society because in the end they can improve public and environmental health;
- How to create broader support for environmental controls by explicitly linking environmental problems and pollution to health issues;
- Where communication and cooperation fail, the utility of law suits against polluters or government agencies (acknowledging this would require a change in the legal culture of the countries involved).

The participants indicated intended follow up activities in their own countries (including staying in contact and regularly exchanging information with other participants):

a. How participants propose to go about disseminating lessons learned during the Study Tour

- To prepare a list of the available information from the Study Tour and to provide it to the NGO community, the water related government agencies, other interested institutions and the media;
- To make all materials available on web-pages;
- To give presentations to fellow NGO representatives and fellow government officials and/or superiors and presentations in the context of other venues such as DEF;
- Use the vehicle of a full issue of an NGO bulletin to share experiences gained and lessons learned;

- Join other NGOs to seek funding to conduct a workshop to transfer the knowledge gained in the Study Tour to other members of the NGO community;
- Write a detailed report including a list of websites about the Study Tour for my superiors and colleagues; if interest is expressed about specific topics, to prepare presentations within our Ministry/Directorate;

b. Follow up plans

- To use the information gained in other ongoing projects and activities;
- To integrate information and experience from the Study Tour into plans for the national activities and demonstration projects in the context of Component 3.4, in part through discussions with the representatives of the operational team;
- To encourage legal assistance NGOs to support, on a *pro bono* basis, citizens in appeals and in legal proceedings against government institutions and public or private polluting companies, in case of a violation of the law that does not lead to enforcement action;
- To undertake activities for early involvement of the public and stakeholders (through radio shows, bulletins, leaflets) in processes of planning, projecting, monitoring and evaluation so that the public voice is at each step, from the beginning to the end of the process.
- To use opportunities under component 3.4 to establish a network of working group of officials and other stakeholders dealing with collection and dissemination of water related information, to support them and encourage regular contact and discussion.
- To create informative materials (including lessons learned and important aspects to be considered) and promote these through an environmental discussion list; the waters intranet; River Basin Committees, and through publication of an article on Component 3.4 in a technical magazine;

c. Plans for improving processes of passive access to information

- Make a comparative analysis between relevant existing legislation for clarifying general requests and specific requests regarding environmental/water information;
- Use the perspective gained to help shape how government will collect and report data to meet future user requirements;
- Use what was learned to improve work on internal rules for providing on information, including:
 - Creation of a database of information requests to keep track of the requests and make sure they are answered in a timely fashion,
 - Creation of a catalogue of what information is available in the Ministry,
 - Nominating a person to be responsible for handling of all kinds of information requests and ensuring timely response, and
 - Seeking review from colleagues to improve the document as a guide for handling information requests, using that input to catch mistakes or areas that lack clarity.
- To use learning about confidential business information to make changes to existing laws and recommend creation of a written guidance document with uniform procedures for government employees to better define which

kinds of information are exempt from disclosure and why, and to organize workshops and trainings on confidential information.

d. Databases

- Using the lessons learned during the Study Tour to make a detailed study of ongoing processes for creating water databases and suggest amendments where necessary;
- Create one database with water related information (such as daily updated information concerning water level, hot spots, level and type of pollutants, laws, treaties, conventions, plans for action, international and regional connections and links, forum, FAQ, Q&A) and disseminate it on different levels: to the public, the water bodies, and Environmental Agencies and Basin Directorates, or create links at different levels between the existing government run environmental and water databases;

e. Questionnaires as an instrument to obtain information from stakeholders

- A questionnaire for NGOs and others on how river basins information reaches the public;
- A questionnaire to create a primary list of stakeholders and, as a follow-up a list with all stakeholders interested in taking part in the public participation processes on water issues;
- A questionnaire on how the information from River Basin Committees reaches the public, to be sent out to the public, including NGOs.

Training to ensure that government officials use the rules on public participation and access to information properly and efficiently, as well as for journalists and NGOs.

f. Manuals, desk books, guidance documents

Participants proposed different kinds of written materials to incorporate the experiences gained during the Study Tour. Their proposals included:

- Prepare and issue guidance for government employees on how best to conduct their tasks and fulfill legal requirements;
- Publish leaflets, booklets and similar information materials for citizens, targeting a wide range of stakeholders including ordinary citizens, members of NGO's, people in media, journalists, and others;
- Work actively to prepare administrative staff manuals and guidelines on access to EWI, based on US examples.

g. Drafting or adapting laws

A few participants indicated that they would strive to incorporate the lessons learned during the study tour in future law drafting in their countries.

1.6 Capacity building activities

Capacity building is a major task of the Consortium in Component 3.4. This has been achieved using a variety of methods.

Capacity building needs were first identified in the Needs Assessment Reports, and were examined in more detail in the discussions in national workshops and also during the 1st regional plenary meeting after the country teams proposed and discussed their country activity plan.

The Consortium also analyzed the needs based on these documents and designed the agenda of the Novi Sad 2nd regional workshop to respond to the various needs identified. Specifically, the workshop was designed to address the following needs:

- Helping participants understand the nature and role of a variety of approaches to the development of manuals, brochures, deskbooks, etc. (note that we use the words deskbook and manual interchangeably, referring to practical documents containing guidance for government officials on access to information and public participation, or as noted above, in some cases in the form of a legally binding document), the process of their development, as well as their possible content (the content can vary widely) and use;
- Providing experience and information about methods of ensuring public participation in river basin management planning and the WFD implementation including approaches from Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and the EU Sava CARDS project
- Confidentiality of environment and water-related information: practical solutions and mechanisms including issues and recent progress within the project in Bulgaria and experiences from The Netherlands

The Dutch and US study tours were capacity building exercises. Country participants identified their needs and what they wanted to learn before the study tours and the Consortium designed the study tour programs with the aim of meeting these needs. At the conclusions of both study tours, the participants evaluated what they learned, how they will use the knowledge in their country activities and/or how they will share the information with their other colleagues.

Each country activity plan includes capacity building efforts. Among these are the skills necessary to develop protocols, deskbooks, manuals and other aids for officials on how to organize and manage public access to information and public participation processes, and brochures for NGOs on how to access information regarding environmental and water related issues. Additionally, almost all of the countries participating in the component have planned for various kinds of training on practical implementation of the public access to information mechanisms and stakeholder involvement. Similarly, the demonstration projects also include a number of capacity building training or workshops to prepare stakeholders for the tasks of developing/discussing improvements in public access to information mechanisms or public participation practices in the community. The Consortium will be involved in supporting capacity building workshops and training through a variety of means, including helping to develop the agenda, participation in the meetings and the activities, and by providing expert input.

1.7 Project partners meeting

The day after the second Regional Meeting, the project partners had a one-day meeting in the REC headquarters in Szentendre (Hungary). The partners

discussed the second regional meeting, identifying those sessions that were successful and possible improvements. Evaluation forms filled in by participants show that they were very satisfied with the meeting.

We also discussed what lessons have been learned thus far. The partners discussed how, during the course of the project as well as after that, lessons learned on the three 'levels' in the component (regional, national and local) could be shared effectively between all participants in all countries. Each country was evaluated and some useful ways of sharing lessons learned were identified. In addition, thoughts were developed on how to organize the last regional meeting (Fall 2006) which will be dedicated to sharing lessons learned, not only among the five countries participating but also with other interested Danube countries.

A related issue that was discussed was how to disseminate the lessons learned in the project as well as the project deliverables. For each level (local, national and regional) specific ideas were developed on how to enhance dissemination.

The final subject on the agenda was the issue of communication between the project participants. The project partners decided on ways to facilitate communications between the participants, including a listserv where they can share messages and the feasibility of developing a restricted-entry website where they can share and discuss draft documents.

1.8 Completion of details on log frame and indicators

In the reporting period, agreement was reached between the Consortium and the DRP on the elements of the log frame, signaled by an email message sent from Rayka Hauser on 9/30/05 indicating that the DRP considered it finalized, leaving open only objective 3 for input from the ICPDR. It was agreed in subsequent discussions that a small amount of work remains to be done, principally filling in indicators for Objective 2, which could not be completed until the Consortium contracted and initiated the demonstration projects. That task will be completed in early January.

1.9 Communications on project component activities

The Consortium has made considerable effort to increase communication on project component activities, both among the participants of the project and between the project and individuals and groups that should be informed about the project and can learn from it. To increase communication between participants, we created and are using a listserv. This listserv can be used by anyone in the project to convey information and ideas. We have encouraged participants to use it when useful and necessary in national language. The address of the listserv is: danubeparticipation@mailinglists.rff.org

The Consortium has also made considerable efforts to provide information about Component 3.4 to as many audiences as possible. These have included a consistent policy of putting project documents on the REC web site and, to the extent possible, on the web sites of REC country offices, linked to DRP, RFF and NYU. Magda Toth Nagy has made presentations about Component 3.4 in meetings throughout Europe in Aarhus Convention, Danube basin, and Water Framework Directive-related events. Reports on the project were published in an issue of the electronic journal, *European Water*

Management News and in the REC's publication, *Green Horizons*, a magazine published in approximately 5000 copies that reaches about 20,000 readers.

Finally, project participants have themselves been active in disseminating information about the project. For example, Nenad C. Bužanin, a Bosnian NGO participant in the US study tour and Executive Director of the ecological-promotion Association Eco Zone - Šipovo, devoted a special issue of his NGO's newsletter, *Eko Zona - Šipovo*, to the study tour and what he learned from it.

The Consortium has also forged connections with Paul Csagoly, Communications Director for the DRP, and anticipates working closely with him to develop a dissemination and communication plan for the balance of the project.

1.10 Lessons learned in this reporting period

The previous progress report listed 10 lessons learned in the first 9 months of the project. The following are additional lessons, not listed in order of importance.

1. Working collaboratively on the project activities, government officials and NGO representatives have gotten to know one another and we are already seeing a growing mutual understanding between the representatives of the two groups in several of the project countries as well as increased interest in cooperation to work together during the lifetime of the project
2. There is a clear added value in sponsoring frequent personal contacts between the members of the national and operational teams, including the persons involved in the demonstration projects, and between the members of the operational teams and the Consortium members. Meetings like the second regional meeting, where participants discuss country activities and demonstration projects and learn from each other, are extremely helpful in accelerating and improving the processes that Component 3.4 aims to enhance.
3. The need to ensure that the members of the country operational teams, including the persons working on the demonstration projects, make full use of the knowledge and experience of the Consortium members. Access should be made as easy as possible. The Consortium will encourage and facilitate regular conference calls and frequent e-mails between operational team members and Consortium members to enable such access.
4. Conference calls and e-mails between operational team members and Consortium members will also enable the Consortium members to keep track of progress made in the project countries, to ensure timely identification of problems and help in resolving on these problems.
5. Sharing information on best practices and problems and difficulties encountered, between the members of the national teams as well as between the national teams of the countries involved, is an important way to enhance the learning process aimed for in this project. As noted, the Consortium will encourage the use by the team members of the already existing listserv and, if feasible, of a website where they can share, discuss and comment on draft documents.

6. The study tours to the Netherlands and the United States, national experiences in the project countries, and presentations on best practices from other countries during the second Regional workshop show that there are a variety of ways to ensure public participation in the context of the European Water Framework Directive (WFD). Project countries should choose from these options ways that fit national legal and political structures, the level of institutional development of these structures, the culture, and the human and financial resources available.

7. The government representatives and NGO representatives involved in Component 3.4 are overloaded with work. Most of them do the work for Component 3.4 in addition to their other full-time daily activities. It is therefore important to make the most of the limited time they have available. This means that the Consortium partners have to make sure that the time of project participants is devoted to the actual substance of Component 3.4 and that spending time on peripheral activities is avoided as much as possible.

Part II.

2. Activities to come in the next 6 months

2.1 Second round of national workshops

A second round of national workshops are planned in late winter, early spring 2006; the dates will be finalized in early January 2006. Members of the Consortium will meet with the members of the national teams in each country to discuss progress on both the country activities and demonstration projects.

National workshops will be used to share experiences, to discuss draft results of the country activities and demonstration projects, to identify best practices as well as problems and barriers (in as far as these have not been identified and discussed before during regular phone calls and emails that will be exchanged between the members of the operational teams and the Consortium members) and to search together for ways to continue best practices and ways to overcome problems and barriers.

In these meetings lessons, further lessons learned will be discussed, including those that can be used not only during the project's lifetime but also after, and to discuss synergies between the country activities and the demonstration projects.

The meetings will also be used to discuss and plan the further course of all activities that are to take place in the course of the project.

2.2 Carrying out country activities

During the next 6 months, each participating country will be largely focused on carrying out the plans agreed in the country activity plans. Country activities will be carried out under the guidance of the operational teams and the Consortium. Country consultants will be hired to prepare draft materials and products based on the agreed terms of reference and these drafts will be commented by the

Operational Team, REC Country Offices and a working group of officials, experts and NGOs who have relevant expertise in the field. The Country Offices and the Operational Teams as well as the Consortium will be closely involved in monitoring the development of the country products and outputs.

The Consortium will closely follow the country activities throughout the different phases, will provide comments on draft outlines (which will be translated to English) and will provide input and specific technical assistance when needed or when requested by the consultants or the Operational Team. The Consortium will participate in major events where the draft materials will be discussed, will participate in the discussion, and will provide examples in the form of options and other input to make the country products more complete. The representatives of the Consortium will also be present at the second national workshops where the draft materials will be discussed.

The Consortium will also help with capacity building activities, will help to develop the content and agenda of the trainings and capacity building workshops, will comment on the trainers, facilitators, experts, and resource persons invited to these events and will participate in them.

During the country activities, special attention will be given to make sure that synergy is built with the demonstration project activities, so they mutually are supporting each other, and to assure that the results of the demonstration projects are channeled into the country activities and the lessons learned on national level will support the local level activities. The project managers of the demonstration projects will be invited to the country events relevant to the focus of the project and to the trainings/capacity building workshops.

Efforts will be made so that when the country activities will be carried out, similar ongoing project activities are taken into account; accordingly, relevant project managers should be invited to the national workshops and in discussions on various products and outputs, to maximize the possibility of overlaps.

2.3 Dissemination activities

The Consortium anticipates a number of dissemination activities in the next reporting period that will assure wide understanding of the goals, purposes and results of the project and its various activities. These will include the late winter/early spring national workshops in each of the participant countries. Also, in the recent meetings in Novi Sad, the Consortium spoke at length with both Paul Csagoly, Communications Director for the DRP, and Rayka Hauser about future communications. The dissemination activities should happen at regional, national and demonstration project levels. We anticipate working closely with Paul Csagoly in January to get his input on the development of a communication/dissemination plan, which will set our activities and goals for the balance of the project.

2.4 Carrying out demonstration projects

The Consortium in cooperation with the Project Managers in the REC Country Offices will play a continuing strong role in the implementation of the Demonstration Projects. One part of this will be close monitoring. Additional opportunities for monitoring and supervision will come in the second round of

National Meetings, as country officials and stakeholders meet face to face with the representatives of the NGOs that are in charge of the Demonstration Project. The Consortium will also attend the most important events that have significance for the success of the Demonstration Projects. Regular briefings about the progress of the implementation process, sometimes through regularly scheduled phone calls, will ensure communication and enable the team to give appropriate fine-tuned assistance on issues as they come up. We will assure that specific needs will be covered and that the lessons learned will be incorporated in the NGO brochures and the other country products or activities.

Thus, specific assistance will be continuous and will take place during the whole process of the implementation of the activities. The Consortium will also respond to requests that may 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

As noted earlier, the project as proposed will assess obstacles to public access to information regarding water pollution issues and work to achieve improvements in the process of information flow among authorities as well as between the authorities and the public. It will use methods of public participation during the development of improvements.

Targeted assistance by the Consortium will focus on activities that are relevant for achieving the main objectives of the project. We will:

- Provide support for the facilitation of discussions on the findings regarding the situation of access to water related information;
- Assist the design of the roundtable discussions so they will facilitate brainstorming and find options and possible solutions;
- Provide input for the capacity building activities that will improve skills and knowledge of representatives of the authorities, NGOs and community in general regarding participatory approaches; and
- Transfer the lessons learned and the approaches that are found useful in solving the local issues into the materials developed for the NGO community on the national level, and mirror the good practices and other recommendations in the materials that will be prepared 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 Consortium will provide assistance in conducting the following activities:

- Assist in finding practical solutions to identified barriers to access to water-related information;

- Contribute with respect to design and process in the effort to increase the knowledge of diverse institutions and local authority representatives, with specific reference to methods and measures that can improve information access and the participatory approaches;
- Provide ideas and other good practice input for the dissemination of identified solutions, summing up the recommendations;
- Assist in transferring the experiences gained to the national level authorities, incorporating the most relevant ones into the country products.

Croatia

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

The project will establish a broad stakeholder body, the Water Forum, as a vehicle for improving communication within the community concerning development of a waste water treatment plant. The activities will also further the implementation of the Croatian Water Law consistent with the EU Water Framework Directive and improvement of current practices under the Law of the Right to Access to Information. The activities will supply a much-needed step towards reinforcing the first pillar of the Aarhus Convention and ratification of the Convention.

Specific assistance by the Consortium will include:

- participate in roundtables and trainings to establish the Osijek Water Forum, provide assistance and, if needed, assist with concrete methodology to facilitate the identification of relevant stakeholders and for developing the mechanisms for public involvement and information sharing;
- assist and facilitate transfer of experiences from other countries and provide assistance with networking related to establishment of the Water Forum;
- be available for discussions and support regarding the public and media outreach activities.

Romania

“Taking Care Of The River Together With Its Beneficiaries “ carried out by the Focus Eco Center, Tirgu Mures

The project aims at improving the flow of information and public involvement in water management through capacity building of diverse interest groups using the EU WDF. It will design a selection process for improved NGO participation in River Basin Councils (RBC) through development of a Mures River model.

Specific assistance will include:

- Addressing the problems identified in communication with Mures River RBC;

- Help develop a process/and methodology which will enable the NGO community to elect representatives within the RBC that will ensure their improved representation;
- Assist in the preparation and implementation of the capacity building exercise that will target NGOs and the diverse groups represented in the Mures River RBC;
- Share good practice examples and the lessons learned during the testing of the participatory process in relation to the development of one part of water management plant of the Niraj River with other RBCs.

Serbia and Montenegro

"Demonstration Project In Bor" carried out by the Association Of Young Researchers

The project goals are to increase public access to information about wastewater problems and the utility of public participation in their successful resolution. This will be achieved through a series of activities, including awareness raising campaigns, electronic networking and sharing of information, improving the capacities of NGOs and local authority to apply for and respond to access to information requests respectively, and developing concrete methods and procedures for securing public access to information.

Specific assistance will include:

- supporting and assisting capacity building events for the local authorities and for local NGOs;
- providing support and, where necessary, instructions on how to establish collection points for gathering, processing and distributing information;
- helping to set up the wastewater/drinking water information database and network to share information.

2.5 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 next 6 month period, December 2005 – June 2006 (compared with the work plan as provided in the first progress report of 15 July 2005), have been highlighted.

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
1. SELECTION AND HIRING OF NATIONAL CONSULTANTS:		
Feedback on draft TOR	DRP	23 November 2004 **
Finalized TOR	Consultant	30 November 2004 **
Collection of CVs and proposal on selected experts	Consultant	5-10 December 2004 **

to DRP		
Approval of nominated experts	DRP/ICPDR	A week after submission **
Contracting of experts	Consultant	Upon approval **
2. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL TEAMS:		
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 **
3. NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS:		
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 st week of June 2005 **
4. INCEPTION REPORT:		
Draft Report	Consultant	17 December 2004 **
Feedback from DRP	DRP	January 7, 2005 **
Final Report	Consultant	End of second week of January 2005 **

5. ICPDR ASSESSMENT:		
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 **
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
6. FINALIZATION OF LOGFRAME AND INDICATORS:		
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	September 2005 **
7. LOCAL DEMONSTRATION SITES:		
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	Consultant	February and April

workshops		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 – balance of project 2006 (on an ongoing basis)
Technical Assistance to demonstration projects	Consultant	October / November 2005 – balance of project 2006 (on an ongoing basis)
End of demonstration projects	Consultant	September 2006
Draft report on lessons learned from demo projects		October 2006
Final report on lessons learned from demonstration projects	Consultant	November 2006
8. MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS:		
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 **
Plan/Prepare for Final Plenary Meeting	Consultant	August –September 2006
Regional Plenary Meeting—Final	Consultant	First two weeks of October 2006
3.4 Steering Committee	Consultant/DRP	27 April 2005 **

Meeting—first		
3.4 Steering Committee Meeting—second	Consultant/DRP	March- April 2006
3.4 Steering Committee Meeting—Final	Consultant/DRP	First two weeks of October 2006
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	First two weeks of October 2006
9. STUDY TOURS:		
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
10. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE / CAPACITY BUILDING:		
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) researched/drafted/translated	Consultant	To be determined based on needs identified in national workshops and regional plenary meetings
Practical work products completed	Consultant	October 2006
11. NATIONAL MEASURES / PRODUCTS:		
Identification of measures/products	National teams/Consultants	February-March 2005, in national

		workshops **
Preliminary design of measures/products	National teams/Consultants	30 June 2005 **
Draft national reform proposals and/or other draft measures/products	National teams/Consultants	September 2006
Final national reform proposals and/or other final measures/products	National teams/Consultants	November 2006
12.DISSEMINATION:		
Draft dissemination plan	Consultant	January 2006
Final dissemination plan	Consultant	February 2006
Dissemination of project products	Consultant	Ongoing
13.WEBSITE:		
Project website established	Consultant	November 2004 **
Posting of project products/articles and periodic updates	Consultant	November 2004-February 2007 on an ongoing basis
14.FINAL REPORT / LESSONS LEARNED:		
Draft Final Report	Consultant	November 2006
Final Report	Consultant	December 2006
15.REPORTING:		
First 6-month report	Consultant	15 July 2005 **
Second (Annual) 6-month Report	Consultant	December 2005 **
Third 6-month report	Consultant	July 2006
Fourth (Annual) 6-month report	Consultant	December 2006
External mid-term evaluation	Indep. Contractor	December 2005
16.ARTICLES:		
Draft articles	Consultant	Ongoing
Finalize/begin to place articles for publication	Consultant	Ongoing

2.6 Second Steering Committee meeting

The 2nd Steering Committee Meeting will take place in March, back to back with one of the national workshops. The Consortium proposes March 13, 2006, immediately before the national workshop in Serbia and Montenegro, which is projected for March 14-15, 2006.

All project countries will be invited to be represented in the meeting. It is anticipated that each country will be represented either by the ICPDR Head of

Delegation or his/her representative. Representatives of DEF, ICPDR, DRP and the implementing Consortium will also be present. The representatives of 4 countries will have to be brought to Serbia, while several other Steering Committee participants will be attending the national workshop in Serbia.

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;
- Present the Dissemination Plan for the results of the project component;
- Present and discuss the plans for the Final Dissemination Workshop;
- Present and discuss future activities; and
- Provide further support and strategic direction for the implementation of the project component.

The draft agenda will be proposed to the DRP and ICPDR by mid-February, and after discussion and agreement will be sent out to the country Heads of Delegations as well as DEF.

Part III

3. Financial Report - Two excel spreadsheets containing the financial report and reallocation table are sent as separate files along with this document.

3.1 Explanatory note

As the Consortium reported in our first 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, some changes need to occur within the distribution of the budget that was allocated under the Consultancy for the country activities.

Beside developing country products that request consultants to develop materials, bylaws, recommendations, guidelines, manuals and brochures, etc., other type of direct cost expenses will also be needed. These needs are mostly due to the meetings of working groups or consultation meetings while developing the country products to ensure broader input for the materials and support for the work of consultants, as well as will assure higher quality results.

In some cases in order to improve knowledge, skills and practice of authorities and NGOs, capacity building activities, trainings were requested as to support the impact of the developed materials and project.

Annexes

Summary of Participants' Comments on USA Study Tour
DRP – Component 3.4 - Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in
Environmental Decision Making

In the context of the Study Tour that took place in the United States (Washington D.C. and New York City) from 11 to 24 June 2005, participants from each of the five participating countries prepared a report. The following is a consolidated summary of these reports.

I Participants, their backgrounds and interests

For each country, two government representatives and one representative of an NGO were selected. The government representatives that attended the study tour had experience and responsibilities that included the field of environment, water quality and quantity management (including the different aspects of the Water Framework Directive), access to information, communication and public participation, implementation of international instruments on water protection and/or cooperation with international bodies in the field of water. The NGO representatives came from NGOs that are actively involved in ecological and environmental issues, with a focus on water and Danube related issues, and that cooperated actively within NGO networks.

Most participants had specific interests and expectations for participating in the Study Tour and came to Washington and New York with detailed questions on the US institutional, legal and policy framework for access to information and public participation (both in general and specific to water related issues), on the practical use of these frameworks by US government officials and NGOs and on the cooperation and other relationships between the different actors involved in these issues.

II Lessons learned during the US Study Tour

In their respective country reports, the participants identified a large number of lessons they had learned during their stay in the US, which they could take home and communicate to their colleagues and other interested persons.

In the interest of clarity, the lessons learned as reported by the study tour participants have been divided into four broad categories:

- a. lessons learned with regard to government officials and actions
- b. lessons learned with regard to NGOs and the larger public
- c. lessons learned on the cooperation of government agencies and other stakeholders (including NGOs)
- d. other lessons learned

a. lessons learned with regard to government officials and actions

With regard to record keeping, the participants indicated that useful lessons had been learned with regard to:

- How the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and similar agencies on a State and city level organize and manage information and data;

- The policy and practice behind creating, handling and storing records in the EPA Records Management System.

The participants had also learned valuable lessons about how to make records and information held available to the public, actively, or on request:

- How to develop effective legal, institutional and practical methods and tools, including manuals and desk books, for providing public access to environmental information, and improving public participation in environmental decision making;
- How to determine what is key environmental information of interest to the public and NGOs and in what format and level of detail it can be presented so as to increase public awareness and possible further public involvement in the decision making process;
- Internal procedures and best practices within government agencies for responding to requests and to assure more uniform responses among the various government offices at the national, regional and local level;
- Means available to streamline the request process
- The idea of reducing the burden of having to respond to numerous specific requests by putting information on web-pages.

At the same time, the Study Tour provided ample information and examples of how to go about withhold certain confidential information. The participants indicated they learned more about:

- What the legal procedures are for handling confidential information, including business information, learning the US rules for what data should/can be protected for disclosure, how to protect it (information tracking system), what to do in the case of requests for confidential data, and issues of legal liability for released confidential data;
- How the different government agencies on the federal, state and city level organize, manage and protect confidential business information, including good practices, on marginal cases and on documents that contain mixed information (some legitimately CBI, and other not);
- Why restricting access to important environmental and health information on the basis of confidentiality or national security, can in some instances become very dangerous;
- The impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on information access in the US.

Participants also stated that they had learned a great deal about how government agencies can communicate with the public. They learned about:

- Effective means of communication with stakeholders and institutions, and very practical information concerning communication with the environmental media;
- Ways to increase public attitudes towards legislation, with the goal of achieving better implementation of laws and respect for rights, laws and courts;
- Ways to develop user friendly, interactive web-based ways of reporting to the public on environmental related data;

In the field of the internal organization of government agencies, lessons were learned with regard to:

- The utility of a generally available document like the U.S. Federal Register to provide the public with the details of what government is contemplating doing and for obtaining feedback;

- The need in each department or ministry for a dedicated unit or at least one trained official with specific responsibility for processing information requirements (initially, with the hope of growing and adding more to respond to demand);
- The utility of establishing Public Affairs Divisions as independent units within Ministries or agencies and Docket Centers with public records rooms;
- Using web based training for government employees.

b. lessons learned with regard to NGOs and the larger public

Participants indicated that during the US Study Tour they learned the following lessons with regard to NGOs and the public:

- The perspectives of environmental and other NGOs (which were sometimes at odds with the government perspective), whether and how these NGOs get the information they need and want from the government, and how they use it to influence public policy.
- What NGOs do when the government denies their request for information;
- How NGOs can raise money and provide sustainability to their activities;
- How citizens and NGOs can reinforce the governments role in enforcement of environmental requirements;
- How NGOs can organize themselves and then grow to serve local community needs;
- The role of NGOs as facilitators of government efforts to convey environmental messages to the general public in a non-technical and understandable manner.

c. lessons learned on the cooperation of government agencies and other stakeholders (including NGOs)

Participants learned many valuable lessons on the different positive aspects of cooperation between NGOs and government agencies:

- Relationships between NGOs and government agencies and how, even when their interests may be adversarial, they can find common ground on which to combine efforts to achieve narrow goals of mutual interests and to develop mutual trust and understanding;
- Increased understanding of the relationship between NGOs and government, including specifics of how various NGOs interact with the government; the importance and role of watchdog organizations; the importance and actual utility of public involvement in environmental projects in achieving a better public outcome; the need to transform scientific data to common language in order to develop public understanding and support and set the stage for their influence on reforms involving specific water bodies; animating people to contribute to the safe environment; possible content of web-pages; useful links;
- How to establish teams of lawyers, scientific experts and communication professionals from NGOs, government agencies or both, which work toward the same goals (such as developing guidelines, manuals, and clear procedures regarding public access to environmental/water information) from their different perspectives, and how this creates a better understanding of the aspects approached. Such teams can be long-term but also short-term and issue-specific;
- Practical examples of how efforts at shared water bodies are organized to manage the complex problem of restoring water quality, how to build alliances and involve the

public in the implementation of complex issues such as dredging Hudson River PCBs project and managing the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

d. Other lessons learned

Other lessons that the participants indicated they had learned:

- How to organize web-sites in different institutions (including government, research and academic institutions and the NGO sector) and the possibilities for access to information through Internet;
- How the environmental press obtains documents and information, how it uses and disseminates that information and the different problems and opportunities in educating and informing journalists on environmental issues;
- How to develop educational materials about water-related to data in order to build public support and interest;
- That benefits from public participation are mutual throughout society because in the end they can improve public and environmental health;
- How to create broader support for environmental controls by explicitly linking environmental problems and pollution to health issues.
- The idea that where communication and cooperation fail, it might be useful to allow law suits against polluters or government agencies. This would however require a change in the legal culture of the countries involved;

III Activities participants plan to recommend or accomplish in their countries, to follow up on lessons learned

a. How to go about disseminating the lessons learned during the Study Tour

In the Study Tour reports, the participants presented a variety of ways to communicate the lessons they had learned to their colleagues, counterparts and other stakeholders. Some of these were:

- To prepare a list of the available information from the Study Tour and to provide it to the NGO community, the water related government agencies, other interested institutions and the media;
- To make all materials available on webpages;
- To give a presentation to fellow NGO representatives and fellow government officials and/or superiors and presentations in the context of other venues such as DEF;
- Devote a full issue of an NGO bulletin to the experiences gained and lessons learned during the USA Study Tour;
- Seek funding, together with other NGOs, to conduct a workshop to transfer the knowledge gained in the Study Tour to other members of the NGO community;
- To write a detailed report including a list of websites about the Study Tour for my superiors and colleagues; if interest is expressed about specific topics, to prepare presentations within our Ministry/Directorate;

A number of the participants vowed to stay in contact with the participants of the other countries and to regularly exchange information with them.

b. Plans to follow up on lessons learned

On a general level, participants proposed *inter alia* the following actions:

- To use the information gained in other ongoing projects and activities;
- To integrate information and experience from the Study Tour into plans for the national activities and demonstration projects in the context of Component 3.4, in part through discussions with the representatives of the operational team;
- To encourage legal assistance NGOs to support, on a *pro bono* basis, citizens in appeals and in legal proceedings against government institutions and public or private polluting companies, in case of a violation of the law that does not lead to enforcement action;
- To undertake activities that support early involvement of the public and stakeholders (through radio shows, bulletins, leaflets) in processes of planning, projecting, monitoring and evaluation so that the public voice is at each step, from the beginning to the end of the process.
- To use opportunities under component 3.4 to establish a network of working group of officials and other stakeholders dealing with collection and dissemination of water related information, to support them and encourage regular contact and discussion.
- To create informative materials (including lessons learned and important aspects to be considered) and promote these through an environmental discussion list; the waters intranet; River Basin Committees, and through publication of an article on Component 3.4 in a technical magazine;

IV. Plans for improving processes of passive access to information

Various participants indicated that they would:

- Make a comparative analysis between relevant existing legislation for clarifying general requests and specific requests regarding environmental/water information,.
- Use the perspective gained to help shape how my government will collect and report data to meet future user requirements ;
- Use what was learned to improve work on internal rules for providing on information. This could potentially include:
 - the creation of a database of information requests to keep track of the requests and make sure they are answered in a timely fashion,
 - the creation of a catalogue of what information is available in the Ministry,
 - nominating a person to be responsible for handling of all kinds of information requests and ensuring timely response, and
 - seeking review from colleagues to improve the document as a guide for handling information requests, using that input to catch mistakes or areas that lack clarity.
- To use what was learned about confidential business information to make changes to existing laws and recommend that a written guidance document with uniform procedures for government employees is created to better define which kinds of information are exempt from disclosure and why, and to organize workshops and trainings on confidential information.

2. Databases

- Using the lessons learned during the Study Tour to make a detailed study of ongoing processes for creating water databases and suggest amendments where necessary;
- Create one database with water related information (such as daily updated information concerning water level, hot spots, level and type of pollutants, laws, treaties, conventions, plans for action, international and regional connections and links, forum,

FAQ, Q&A) and disseminate it on different levels: to the public, to the water bodies, to Environmental Agencies and Basin Directorates, or create links at different levels between the existing government run environmental and water databases;

3. Questionnaires

Based on their experiences, the participants indicated they would use the instrument of a questionnaire to find out certain information from stakeholders:

- A questionnaire for NGOs and others on how river basins information reaches the public;
- A questionnaire to help create a primary list of stakeholders and, as a follow-up a list with all stakeholders interested in taking part in the public participation processes on water issues;
- A questionnaire on how the information from River Basin Committees reaches the public, to be sent out to the public, including NGOs.

4. Training

From the Study Tour the participants learned that in order to ensure that government officials use the rules on public participation and access to information properly and efficiently, these officials would need to be trained. A number of them indicated such trainings as follow-up actions to the US Study Tour. Some also proposed trainings for journalists and NGOs.

5. Manuals, desk books, guidance documents

Participants proposed different kinds of written materials to incorporate the experiences gained during the Study Tour. Their proposals included:

- Prepare and issue guidance for government employees on how best to conduct their tasks and fulfill legal requirements;
- Publish leaflets, booklets and similar information materials for citizens, targeting a wide range of stakeholders including ordinary citizens, members of NGO's, people in media, journalists, and others;
- To work actively to prepare administrative staff manuals and guidelines on access to EWI, based on US examples;

6. Drafting or adapting laws

A few participants indicate that they would strive to incorporate the lessons learned during the Study Tour in the drafting procedures for new laws in their countries.

The following are additional thoughts the participants had with regard to their experiences in the Study Tour:

- From all the examples offered during the US Study Trip, the aspects regarding communicating and cooperating with different partners even when you do not agree with their point of view were the ones that will help me improve my abilities to work in this field and to contribute, so that my NGO becomes more efficient and professional in this field.
- The study tour gave me a good view of the institutional framework in the USA for environment and water, and the possibility to compare it with ideas we are elaborating now in my own country, considering structure, responsibilities, enforcement measures, deadlines, etc. It allowed

me to expanded my perspectives of how a stable institutional framework should look, one not influenced by the results of every forthcoming election;

- I've come to understand that access to documents is as important as access to data;
- As an engineer, I've become aware of the benefit of sharing ideas and discussing environmental and water related topics with environmental lawyers. I've discovered what an advantage it could be to have lawyers and technical experts working together.
- As a government employee, the experience led me to thoroughly understand the role of NGOs. I've learned that we in government can gain power by working with NGOs to achieve the EU WFD objectives and the importance of public participation in this process. But the partnership needs to be carefully analyzed and organized, to avoid it becoming a mere formality or even its own contradiction;
- As a result of the study tour, I have clear picture about competencies and responsibilities of government in public participation process, but also a wider understanding that public participation in making decisions and implementing decisions is crucial in our ratification of the Aarhus convention, but even more generally important in our process of democratizing our society;
- Even through I work within the governmental structure, I was really impressed by the good and strong collaboration established between authorities and NGOs in order to mutually identify and promote solutions for environmental issues (e.g., the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the environmental protection authorities, Pogo Project, OMB Watch activities);
- We can use what we learned in strengthening our EIA and SEA permit procedures; by incorporating a new approach of NGOs relations, a sustainable partnership will be beneficial for the environmental authority and NGOs activities, and also for public.
- The Study Tour enhanced my communication and collaboration skills, openness, ability to better hear and respect other (different than my) opinions, and also to respect my personal feelings and thoughts; all of mentioned factors are needed in better facilitation of enhancing public participation in my own society.
- Although I know it would be difficult to manage in two weeks, I wish we had seen how the matters we were talking about could be accomplished in reality or some practical work (e.g. public hearing);
- The study tour had additional benefits as it allowed an opportunity for superb communication, internal support and team spirit between the members of the our national group, providing a positive model for a country that is still recovering from major divisions and violence between groups within the country;
- It would be worthwhile to try to make a contact with willing lawyers and encourage them to aim at becoming "environmental lawyers" as a career, and with technical experts willing to acquire knowledge from legislative point of view. With respect to environmental education in general, we should try to initiate establishment of the "environmental lawyers" group in our country.

Program of the study tour in the Netherlands

for

**Delegations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia,
Romania, Serbia and Montenegro**

“ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION”

within the

EUROPEAN WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

29 October – 5 November, 2005

(Version 20051027)

Monday 31st October Venue: Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) Rijnstraat 8; 2515 XP The Hague (T +31.70. 339 4568) Meeting room A 04.21			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Public Information Act (WoB), Aarhus Convention, European Water Framework Directive (EU WFD) • Role of governments and non-governmental organizations within EU WFD 			
Time	content	organisation	remarks
9:00-10:00	Introduction of the program to the participants		
10:00 – 11:00	Public Information Act	Mr M. van Loop Ministry of Domestic Affairs T +31.70.426 85 23	Public Information Act (WoB); regulates the right to gain insight into governmental documents.
11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break			
11:15 – 12:15	Aarhus Convention	Mr. W.J. Mesters Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) T +31.70.3394047	The Århus Convention establishes a number of rights of the public with regard to the environment. Public authorities at national, provincial or local level are to contribute to allowing these rights to become effective. The Convention provides for: - the right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities - the right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision-making. - the right to challenge, in a court of law, public decisions
12:15 – 13:45 Lunch			
13:45 – 14:15	Introduction EU WFD	Mr R. Uijterlinde Association of Water Boards T +31.70.351 97 51	The Association of Water Boards is the national association of the 27 Water Boards in The Netherlands. Water Boards are responsible for the protection against water, water quality and quantity. They contribute to the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive. The Association cooperates with the National Government and the Interprovincial Discussion Group on water regulation in the Netherlands. (see also Tuesday, 10:00h)
14:15 – 14:45	Access to information and public participation EU WFD from NGO/public perspective	Mr T. Lycklama, Reinwater Foundation T +31.20.6719322	Reinwater Foundation is an environmental NGO, striving for clean and safe water. It represents the stakes of water users and campaigns for changes.
14:45 -15:15	Discussion and questions for Mr Lycklama and Mr Uijterline		
15:15 - 15:30 Coffee break			
15:30 – 16:00	Time for quick recap and possible questions so far		
16:00 – 17:00	Access to information and public participation within EU WDF; role of government	Ms M. Hendriks Ministry transport, public works and water management (V&W) Directorate Water T +31.70.351 80 80	At the national level, the EU WFD is translated in national instruments, regulations and frameworks, such as monitoring frameworks or criteria setting. In the Netherlands, the Ministries of transport, public works and water management, VROM and LNV (Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality) are responsible for the implementation of the EU WFD.

Tuesday 1 November Venue: Netherlands Water Partnership (at IHE premises) Westvest 7 2611 AX Delft (T +31 215 18 52)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder participation facilitation Stakeholder Experiences with WFD – several stakeholders Meeting with Dutch Water Partnership members 			
8:15– 9:15 Bus trip to train station Holland Spoor (HS) and by train to Delft (<45 minutes)			
10:00 – 11:00	Coordination of regional cooperation and implementation, representation stakes of Water boards- National level	Mr. P. de Vries Association of Water Boards T +31.70.351 9834	The Association of Water Boards (Unie van Waterschappen) protects the interests of the 27 Water Boards at national level. All Water Boards are member of this association. On behalf of the Water Boards, the Association is spokesperson to the parliament, public authorities and other organisations. The Association is a partner in issues of strategic water management and legislation. With the Water Boards, the Association looks for solutions to common problems. (see also Monday, 13:45h)
11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break			
11:15 -12:00	Positions and scenarios within participation.	Mr. N. Cremers RIZA Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment T +31.320.29 84 11	The RIZA is the research and advisory body for the Rijkswaterstaat / the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management regarding inland water in the Netherlands. It is a leading international centre of knowledge for integrated water management. The institute collects data on and conducts research into water quality and quantity. On the basis of these data the RIZA makes recommendations concerning the management of inland water in the Netherlands and abroad. Within EU WFD, RIZA is, amongst others, secretary of six clusters of decision making and six working groups.
12:00 – 13:00	Involvement environmental NGOs	B. Hermans The Netherlands Society for Nature and Environment T +31.30.2331328	The Netherlands Society for Nature and Environment is an independent organisation committed to securing a vigorous and healthy natural environment.
13:00 – 14:00 Lunch at NWP			
14:00 – 15:00	Framework Public Participation	Mr E. Mostert TU Technical University T +31.15.2787800	Mr Mostert has been an expert member of the EU drafting group "Guidance on Public Participation" for implementing the Water Framework Directive.
15:00 – 16:00	Involvement in water management by stakeholders	M. Herbergs OWN: Discussion group Water management and North Sea T +31.70.351 89 99	The national level discussion about policy plans related to water issues is concentrated at OWN, the 'Discussion group Water management and North Sea' (Overlegorgaan Waterbeheer en Noordzee-aangelegenheden). Participants are (representatives of) state secretary for transport, public works and water management; nature, environmental and leisure organisations; oil and gas industry; mining industry; chemical industry; water supply and waste water companies; labour organisations; and the agrarian and fishery sectors.
16:00 – 16:20 Coffee break			
16:20 – 17:00	Professional/Industrial Fisheries	Mr A. Heinen Fisheries Centre, Rijswijk T +31.70.336 96 13	Stakes of the professional fishers and fishery sector within the implementation of the EU WFD
17:00 Informal meeting with Dutch Water Partnership members			

Wednesday 2 November

Travel by bus The Hague – Rotterdam Mainport – Middelburg
 Venue Rotterdam: World Port Center (WPC)
 Wilhelminakade 909
 Port number 1247
 3072 AP Rotterdam
 (Meeting room 17.00.1)

- Implementation of EU WDF in Rotterdam Mainport
- Trip to Middelburg and visit to Dutch Deltaworks, including experiences local representatives

8:15 – 9:15**Bustrip The Hague (hotel) - Rotterdam Mainport**

10:00 – 11:30	Rotterdam Mainport Excursion	Mr. M. Eisma Strategie Infrastructuur & Maritieme Zaken Beleidsadviseur Havenbedrijf Rotterdam N.V. T +31.10.252 13 12 F +31.10.252 19 86 www.portofrotterdam.com	Presentations include information on the realization of WFD by the mainport, including water sampling, sediments/sludge regulations and provision of public information
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11:45 – 13:15**Bustrip Rotterdam Mainport – Delta Works****13:30 – 14:15****Lunch at Delta Works restaurant**

14:30 – 17:00	Delta Works Excursion	WaterLand Neeltje Jans Eiland Neeltje Jans Faelweg 5 4354 RB Vrouwenpolder T +31.111.655655 F +31.111.653164 www.neeltjejans.nl	The Delta Works form the largest water management project in the world. It is built in response to the devastating floods in 1953. The Delta Works protect the province of Zeeland and the rest of the Netherlands against flooding.
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17:00 – 17:30**Bus trip Delta Works – Best Western Hotel Arneville Middelburg**

Thursday 3 November Venue: Best Western Hotel Arneville Buitenruststraat 22; 4337 EH Middelburg (T +31.118.638456)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of EU WDF in Scheldt District and Scaldit pilot project • Experiences of stakeholders (government, working group, transboundary information exchange) 			
9:00 – 10:45	Case study Scheldt River Basin (France, Belgium, Netherlands) (Scaldit)	Ms S. de Jong Ministry transport, public works and water management (V&W) Deputy Coordinator Scheldt Basin. Directorate Zeeland T +31.320.298431	Introduction of the EU WFD at the Scheldt river basin, with emphasis on public participation. Ministry of V&W, Directorate Zeeland is partner in the Scaldit pilot programme. Scaldit is an international program to improve the management of Scheldt River Basin, covering France, Belgium and the Netherlands. VVM/Belgium is the project manager of Scaldit (Refer to 14:30 today) The project runs from January 2003 to December 2005. The project lays the basis for the development of integrated water management in the Scheldt River basin. The project investigates the feasibility of the guidance documents that the European Union has provided in connection with the Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive.
10:45 – 11:00 Coffee break			
11:00 – 12:00	Experiences of environmental NGO	Mr. G. van Zonneveld Zeeuwse Milieufederatie / Environmental Association of Zeeland (NGO) T. +31.113.23 00 75	Experiences of environmental NGO, as a stakeholder within Scaldit Project.
12:00 – 13:00 Lunch			
14:00 – 14:30 Coffee break			
14:30 – 15:30	Experiences/ international dimension	Ms. I. Dieltjens Vlaamse Milieu Maatschappij (VMM) / Flemish Environment Agency (Belgium) T +32.53.726634	VMM is the project manager for the Scaldit pilot programme. Refer to 9:00 today.
15:30 – 16:30	Local government (policy, translation WDF into practice)	Mr. N. Oskam Provincial Government of Zeeland T +31.118.631700	Translation of EU WFD and Scaldit into local policy and implementation; experiences

Friday 4 November

Venue: Dow Chemicals Terneuzen

- Experiences chemical industry with EU WFD
- Concluding meeting

08:15 – 09:00

Bustrip Middelburg – Terneuzen

09:30 – 12:30	Experiences of participation of Industry Scaldit	Mr J. van Seters Dow Chemical Benelux /VNO NCW T. +31.115.672369	Implementation of EU FWD at DOW Chemicals (delivering information, permits, sampling, etc) Mr Seters is a member of VNO-NCW, the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers. VNO-NCW is the largest employers' organisation in the Netherlands. VNO-NCW represents the common interests of Dutch business, including on EU WFD issues. Tour around the Dow Chemicals plant
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12:30 – 13:15 Return to hotel

13:15 – 14:15 Lunch at the hotel

14:15 – 16:00	Meeting and closing discussion about study tour in the hotel
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17:00 – 19:00 Bustrip Middelburg – The Hague hotel

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NL Study Tour on “Access to Information and Public Participation”
EU Water Framework Directive

29th October-5th November, 2005

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**Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making
UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project, Project Output 3.4**

2nd Regional Workshop

**December 5 – 6, 2005
Novi Sad, Serbia**

Agenda

The goals of the 2nd Regional Workshop are:

- to build the capacities of the Danube country officials and NGOs and assist them to address common barriers and problems identified in the Needs Assessments and during national workshops;
- to assist the country partners to carry out the activities to address major barriers defined in the country activity plans;
- to provide opportunities for the participants from the project countries to share their experience and to learn from the experience of other EU countries;
- to discuss how synergies can be built between the demonstration projects and the country activities; and
- to review the progress of the project to date and shape future activities

December 4th

Participants arrive

19.00 Introduction of participants

19.30 Welcome Dinner

1st Day-5th December, 2005

9.00 - 9.30 Registration

9.30 – 10.15 Introductory Session

A. Facilitator's introduction and icebreakers (15 min)

B. Update on the current status of Component 3.4 by Magdolna Toth Nagy, Project Manager, REC (8-10 minutes)

C. Update on DRP Public Participation developments by Rayka Hauser, Public Participation Expert, UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project (5-8 minutes)

D. DRP communication and media assistance to DRP project components, by Paul Csagoly, Communications Expert, UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project (5-8 min)

E. Update on the recent Public Participation activities of ICPDR by Jasmine Bachman, Public Participation and Public Relations Expert (5-8 min)

10.15 – 11.15 Country activities and demonstration projects

A. Presentation by country teams of country activity plans and demonstration projects Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina
(5 minutes/country teams and 5 minutes/demonstration projects)

B. Questions and answers and discussion (10 min for each country)

11.15 – 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 – 12.30 Country activities and demonstration projects

A. Presentation by country teams of country activity plans and demonstration projects Croatia, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro
(same time as above)

B. Questions and answers and discussion (10 min for each country)

C. Discussion, brainstorming and conclusions: How best to expedite and facilitate country activities and demonstration projects?
Synergies between the country activities and pilot projects.

Ongoing technical assistance from the Consortium

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch break

14.00 – 15.30 Session 2: Preparing Desk books and Manuals for government officials and NGO Brochures - their role, function, use

A. Introduction to the issues presented by preparing desk books, manuals and brochures by Ruth Greenspan Bell, Resources for the Future

B. Questions and answers

15.30-15.45 Coffee break

15.45 – 17.30 Small working groups work on desk books, manuals and brochures

A. Work on draft outlines of desk books, manuals, NGO brochures
Break into 5 country working groups for governmental manuals (predominantly government representatives) and one working group on civil society brochures (predominantly NGO representatives)

19.30 Dinner

2nd Day, 6th December, 2005

9.00 – 10.30 Results of small working groups

A. Each of the five small working groups reports back to the plenary (presentations of 5 min. each)

B. Discussion

C. Conclusions

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 How to ensure and promote public participation/stakeholder involvement in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD): examples of good practices

A. Different forms and experiences of public participation/stakeholder involvement in the implementation of WFD requirements, Presentation from Slovenia, Krka Pilot project, Darinka Pek Drapal and Samo Grošelj (10-15 min)

B. Regional Sava Cards Project, Pilot River Basin Plan for the Sava River – Public Participation-Public and NGO participation in the Project (8-10 minutes)
Jovan Despotovic

Questions and answers

B. River Basin Committees and Directorates as possible form of public involvement within EU WFD and other forms of public involvement: Developments in Bulgaria and Romania.

Presentations on the legal background, the tasks of River Basin Directorates and Committees and the current practices by:

Valentin Brustur, additions by Mihaela Madar-Romania

Teodora Todorova, additions by Ivan Kalamerov- Bulgaria

(10 minutes each)

C. Discussion, including experiences from the Dutch Study and NGO perspectives

12.30 - 14.00 Lunch break

14.00-15.30 Parallel workshops focused on specific issues

Optional parallel working groups on:

- 1) Confidentiality of environment and water-related information: Practical solutions and mechanisms
Issues and recent progress within the project in Bulgaria, by Alexander Kodjabashev
Experiences from The Netherlands, by Ernestine Meijer, New York University School of Law
- 2) How to work with communications and media to support project activities: session for NGOs involved in the demonstration projects and other interested NGO and government representatives (Paul Csagoly, DRP consultant)

15.30-15.45 Coffee break

15.45-17.00 Plenary session

A. Short summary report from the 2 working groups (5 minutes each)

B. Conclusions

C. Shaping future activities, including specific assistance for country activities and demonstration projects by the Consortium, cooperation between country activities teams and demonstration project teams, upcoming project events

17.00 Closure of Workshop

List of Participants

Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making

Danube Regional Project Component 3.4

2nd Regional Meeting

5-6th December, 2005

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List of national activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina within component DRP 3,4

Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project, Project Output 3.4

No Priority	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)	Stakeholders to be involved (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
1	Contribution to the development of a Water Data Base -starting point, CARDS project report on monitoring and LIFE project concerning development of info system in accordance with EEA requirements; -continuation of assessing the institutions that should collect and disseminate water information, active/passive -NGO community/DEF to give input	-consultants – Mr. Zoran Lukac (RS) and Mr, Martin Tais/Esenja Kupusovic (FBiH), on the basis of results of CARDS and LIFE projects -REC BIH CO as overall coordinator of activities -OT	All officials bodies involved in AI related to water issues: ministries, public enterprises, institutes, municipalities, -bodies, institutions and organizations involved within the process of PP relate to the water issues (as listed in previous task)
2	Development of guidelines/manual for authorities -OP team and representatives of relevant authorities to design a table of content - production of different chapters -1sr draft to be produced and to be discussed in light with int'l experiences -NGOs to give comments on the format and style of communication to public when auth. Disseminate info	-REC and partners commenting the table of content, providing the existing guidelines -REC BIH CO to coordinate activities REC HQ – B&H stakeholders; -REC HQ to prepare first draft of manual, -Comments of the Draft by B&H experts – input; -Discussion on the Draft by wider group of stakeholders, including OT, DEF network, other NGOs involved in networking., Special attention to be paid to municipalities -organization of roundtable/WS aimed to discuss Draft – how to make it user friendly and operational	-representatives of officials form all B&H levels (B&H, entity, Brcko District, municipalities, Focal points in int'l conventions related to the water issues – Danube and Sava Commission members, -experts involved in realization of tasks 1 and 2;

No Priority	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)	Stakeholders to be involved (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
3	<p>Contribute to development of bylaw(s), procedure with regard to Water Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -consultation with Op team members that would assess the needs of bylaws connected to the draft Water Law in light of needs for further elaboration of procedures, rights and duties concerning AI and PP -selection of priority bylaws in close cooperation with National OT -legal drafting exercise after needs are selected -organization of half day meeting/consultations concerning drafts bylaws – improving of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -REC CO BIH experts for legal drafting - consultants when needed for legal and institutional assessment -operational team to participate in prioritization; -REC CO BIH to prepare first working drafts of bylaws, when needed supported by consultants -OT and other stakeholders to participate in process of consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ministries in charge for water management and environment (water quality) -Hydro-meteorological Institutes, -Public Enterprise for water management (FB&H), -Institutes in charge for water quality, -NGOs familiar with AI and PP, DEF network, -Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture associations (water consumption); Ombudsman; Human rights related NGOs
4	<p>NGO/DEF contributing to the improvement of access to water related through development of a water information brochure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize a WG that would support the activity Produce an information brochure/leaflet for NGOs in order to assist the public to find the water related information sources, and increase their capacity to interpret the data provided by authorities. Based on the findings to give input to the Manual addressed to the authorities 	<p>DEF network, other NGO networks dealing with Water issues and Aarhus Convention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -REC BIH office to coordinate 	<p>NGOs active the field of access to water related information and public participation including DEF, Eco-network (Ekomreza), NGO representatives to National OT,</p>

**List of national activities in Bulgaria under Component 3.4 of the Danube Regional Project
Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making**

Activities/List of steps	Stakeholders	Coordinator
1) Assessment and improvement of the rules and regulations regarding the confidentiality of environmental information for authorities	The stakeholders described in the Notes.	
A) <i>Assessment of the current situation in Bulgaria</i> and comparison with EU practices on access to water-related and other environmental information. The activity includes:	The same stakeholders	External expert
B) <i>Elaboration of a set of recommendations</i> for improvements in the current situation in Bulgaria with respect to access to environmental information: e.g. a draft law, an amendment to existing laws or a guidance material for civil servants	The same stakeholders	External expert
C) <i>Formation of a Working Group (WG)</i> of officials and NGO experts to discuss and develop the proposals for improvement of access to environmental information. (The group will have 3 meetings throughout the project implementation).	The same stakeholders	External expert / REC CO Bulgaria
D) <i>Interaction with interested and affected businesses.</i> Organizing of half a day meeting in Sofia where businesses representatives will discuss the proposed draft(s) for creation/amendment of the legislation concerning access to environmental information. (Expected number of participants – 20)	The same stakeholders with a focus on business representatives.	External expert and REC CO Bulgaria
E) <i>Capacity building workshop for officials</i> for presenting and discussing practices in EU Member States on access to environmental information and their potential application in Bulgaria. (Potential venue for the meeting: MoEW. Expected number of participants – 25-30 officials).	The same stakeholders	REC CO Bulgaria /MoEW
F) <i>Development of a guidance material</i> on how to address the issue of confidentiality in environmental information provision. The purpose of the guidance material will be to give recommendations to individuals and organizations how to act when access to information is denied on confidentiality grounds either by institutions, or by businesses.	The same stakeholders	External expert/ WG members

2) Training and capacity building for authorities	National and regional authorities	External experts/ REC CO Bulgaria
A) <i>Identification of good practices and failures to implement the existing procedures for active/passive access to information with special focus on water related environmental information.</i>	MoEW, other authorities, NGOs	MoEW, other national and regional institutions, NGOs, external experts, REC CO Bulgaria
B) <i>Training of officials to implement the identified techniques/good practices during one-day workshop based on the results from 2 A). The developed report for promotion of good practices prepared under 2 A) will be included in the training materials and discussion topics of the workshop. (Expected number of participants: 25, as the training is targeted at officials from the RBDs and other institutions that process and provide water related information).</i>	MoEW, other authorities, NGOs	External experts / REC CO Bulgaria
3) Enhancing the active dissemination of information on environment and water through a web page	MoEW, other authorities, NGOs	REC CO Bulgaria
A) <i>Elaboration of a web site of the Danube RDB (and eventually of the West Aegian RBD) and integrating them with the existing RBD web sites. The activities include:</i>	MoEW, other authorities, NGOs	MoEW/RBD/ExEA/WG/ REC CO Bulgaria
B) <i>Development of an online material on frequently asked questions (FAQ)</i>	MoEW, RBDs, other authorities, NGOs	External experts/MoEW/ RBDs/ REC CO Bulgaria
C) <i>Develop and upload on web site a guidance material on access to information. The activities include:</i>	MoEW, other authorities, NGOs	External experts/MoEW/ REC CO Bulgaria
D) <i>Hosting and maintenance</i>	RBDs, MoEW	External provider
E) <i>Training of RBDs IT staff</i>	RBDs, MoEW	External expert , REC COBulgaria

4) Brochure development	NGOs, MoEW, RBDs, RIEW	External experts / WG
A) <i>Develop a brochure targeted at NGOs and the general public on how/where to access environmental / water related information. (Expected size of the brochure: up to 10 pages;</i>	NGOs, MoEW, RBDs, RIEWs, WG	External experts / WG

number of copies: 5,000 to 8,000).		
B) <i>Half a day meeting for discussion of the draft brochure</i> (Expected number of participants – 20).	NGOs, MoEW, RBDs, RIEWs, WG	REC CO Bulgaria
C) <i>Publication of the brochure</i> 1. Design, layout and publication of the brochure 2. Dissemination of the brochure.	NGOs, MoEW, RBDs, RIEWs, WG	External provider / REC CO Bulgaria / MoEW, RBDs
5) 2nd National Meeting on DRP 3.4	NGOs, MoEW, RBDs, RIEWs,	REC CO Bulgaria / MoEW
6) PR services	MoEW, RBDs, RIEWs	External provider / REC CO Bulgaria
7) Demo project assistance	NGOs, MoEW, RBDs, RIEWs,	External experts / REC CO Bulgaria
8) Project management and reporting	REC CO Bulgaria, WG	REC CO Bulgaria

Notes:

1. A **Working Group**(WG) of 4-5 representatives of key stakeholders will be established in the last quarter of 2005 to assist the planning and implementation of key project activities. It will naturally succeed the former **Operational Group** (OG) under the project as it will attract some of its members.
2. A wider circle of stakeholder experts/bodies will be asked for a feedback when a questionnaire, web page or paper/brochure is prepared. A copy of the questionnaire/the paper will be sent electronically to these experts/bodies and they will be asked to comment on the content. The following experts/bodies could be included in the list: *at the national level:* Ministry of Environment and Water and other relevant national ministries and agencies; Association of Municipal Ecologists and National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities; *business community:* the Bulgarian Economic Forum, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce / Bulgarian Industrial Chamber and their key member businesses, Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum, The Bulgarian International Business Association (BIBA) and other relevant local or international commercial associations; *at the local level:* the four Regional Basin Directorates; municipalities and Regional Inspectorates on Environment and Water in the Danube region where industrial activities take place – Russe, Pleven, Lom, Vidin, Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, etc; *civil society:* experts from key NGO active in water protection and in access to information issues, ect..
3. In addition, smaller face-to-face meetings will be held during the project implementation and the preparation of questionnaires, web pages or papers/brochures. Participants in those meeting will be representatives from the most direct beneficiaries of the concrete activity (e.g. representatives from the 4 RBDs when the web page design is discussed) and members of the Working Group under the project.



**List of national activities in Croatia within component DRP 3.4 Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making
UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project, Project Output 3.4**

No Priority	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)	Stakeholders to be involved (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
1	<p>Drafting internal protocol</p> <p>Step 1: Analysis on the situation of public access to water management related information in EU countries</p> <p>Step 2: Base on that proposing and drafting the best model of access to information and information exchange</p> <p>Step 3: Conducting workshop to present the 1st draft of the protocol</p> <p>Step 4: Harmonization of the proposed model according to the comments/proposals provided through the workshop/discussion</p> <p>Step 5: Finalization of the model taking into account the outcome of the discussions</p> <p>Step 6: Designing and printing the document</p> <p>Step 7: Presentation and dissemination of a new model</p>	<p>Directorate for Water Management in Croatian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; Dept. responsible for public participation issues; Sanja Genzić</p> <p>National experts “Eurolex” REC CO role is to facilitate and support the project through organizing coordination meetings and to coordinate particular phases.</p>	<p>Ministry for Environmental Protection, Spatial Planning and Construction; Dept. for Environmental Protection Nevenka Preradović; Ministry for Marine Affairs, Tourism, Traffic and Development; Dept. for PR and public participation issues; REC CO</p>

No Priority	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)	Stakeholders to be involved (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
2	<p>Publishing a practical guide/brochure on public access to water related information to be used by the NGOs and general public, aimed on improvement of the public access to water related information.</p> <p>The brochure will enable target group in a way of providing them practical assistance on how/where/whom to approach when info is needed , which institution holds what information, and also how to address relevant institutions in a more efficient way.</p> <p>Step 1 Developing brochure</p> <p>Step 2 Public presentation and dissemination</p>	<p>DEF Croatia and Croatian Environmental Agency</p> <p>REC HQ will provide the input on similar projects deliverables. REC CO will provide technical support.</p>	<p>MoE Nevenka Preradović; Croatian Waters; Croatian Environmental Agency; Directorate for Water Management - Karmen Cerar and ICPDR delegation to Croatia - Mojca Lukšić .</p>
3	<p>Developing the training program on AI and PP procedures</p> <p>Step 1. Creating/developing the training program/materials</p> <p>Step 2. Conducting 2 two-days workshops</p> <p>Step 3. Evaluation process. Defining future needs in capacity building activities.</p>	<p>Ministry for Environmental Protection, Spatial Planning and Construction; Directorate for Environmental Protection - Nevenka Preradović will be the resource point and lecturer. She will be designing agenda and training program in cooperation and input from "Croatian Waters" representative.</p> <p>Professional trainers should be contracted to deliver trainings. REC CO will provide technical support and coordination.</p>	<p>All Croatian Ministries and regional/local public authorities dealing with all kinds of environmentally relevant information</p>



List of national activities in Romania under Component 3.4 of the Danube Regional Project

**Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making
UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project, Project Output 3.4**

No. Priority	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
1	<p>Improvement in the functioning of the River Basin Committees (RBCs), focusing on communication and public involvement aspects</p>	<p>1/Assess how currently RBCs function with regard to communication and information dissemination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification and analysis of stakeholders involved in WFD implementation • assess the situation regarding the accessibility and dissemination of information (documents produced by RBCs) • assess the methods of communication/ information dissemination of RBC members and among RBCs and how the information from the members is reaching the communities (public) • assess and analyse how the feedback from the public on the delivered information gets back to RBC and how this is being used • assess and analyze how feedback among RBC members is being used within the RBCs and among RBCs <p>How: Form a group of stakeholders that will steer the process and will guide the expert in the work to be performed RBC WG will be formed by Op.Team members, some selected members of RBCs and their supervisors in the MoEWM, and RW. Their work would consist at this stage in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - give guidance to expert for elaboration of questionnaire targeting the current function of the RBCs - brainstorm and elaborate on how the questionnaires will be distributed and later collected - consider the ways how the results will be integrated so that it highlights the aspect needed - comment and complete the work of the expert - collecting input of certain aspects form the Demo Project <p>Translation in English the content of the questionnaires, translation of the insights of the findings, so that partners can make input.</p> <p>2/ Share good practice examples of RBCs (Rom, and other countries)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present models of information dissemination and communication and within RBCs and other similar entities in other countries and how feedback is used • present case examples (from Romania and other countries), ok of stakeholder representation and involvement of public into water management issues in communities

No. Prior ity	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners could contribute to this work. <p>The RBC WG and NL study tour participants work would consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -assisting expert for collecting these good practices from other countries, on the specific gaps and problems identified by the questionnaires • -share their own experiences • -guide the work of the expert <p>3/ Drafting recommendations presenting solutions for the RBCs in scope to improve their work with regard to A to I and PP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -using the result of the assessed situation, then discussing the good practices presented and look into how these can be best implemented within the structure of the RBCs in Romania <p>The RBC WG work would consist in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -assist the expert in preparing an appropriate summary/ working document for the 2nd National Meeting -participate actively and give more insights for the participants of the 2nd National Meeting for this agenda point -to guide the process of feedback collection and discuss recommendations for achieving improvements <p>Translation of the summary of the working document.</p> <p>4/ Capacity building for the RBCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - based on the findings, best practices discussed, the possible recommendations a larger group of RBCs could undergo through a targeted hands on exercise on how this know how could be put into practice
2	<p>Development of Manual for Authorities for assuring public access to water related information and sharing practices of public involvement in water decision making</p>	<p>Establishing a WG that will serve as steering body during the process, Op Team members, NGO, RW, NEPA, MoEWM</p> <p>1/ Draft the content of the guidance material</p> <p>The Task of this WG will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -to select an appropriate expert/s -to brainstorm over the content of such manual -to guide the work of the expert <p>2/ Discuss and disseminate the 1st draft</p> <p>The task of the WG would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -to give input , feedback directions after reading the first draft -to guide the work of the expert for continuation of its work -to assist the expert to prepare the extract for the 2nd draft for the 2nd National Meeting <p>3/ Present the 2nd draft and collect feedback, comments from stakeholders</p> <p>4/To assist the work of the expert in integrating the comments collected, as well as integrating the issues identified and finalised under activity 1/</p>

No. Prior ity	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)												
	Development of brochure for wider public and NGOs (interlink of certain parts from manuals) on where/what/how the information on water related issues can be accessed and how public can be part of the decision making process)	NGO WG, coordinated by DEF -Eco Counselling Center Galati -define the content how, which information will be used? -select the authors -prepare 1 st draft -discuss in the 1 st draft among interested NGOs -share the 2 nd draft during the 2 nd National Meeting -integrate the findings, and the working paper on the selection process of delegated NGO representatives within RBCs, input from Demonstration Project												
<p>Abbreviations:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>MoEWM– Ministry of Environment and Water Management</td> <td>RW-Romanian Waters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NEPA - National Environmental Protection Agency</td> <td>MoPH-Ministry of Public Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td>REPA - Regional Environmental Protection Agency</td> <td>MoET- Ministry of Economy and Trade</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LEPA – Local Environmental Protection Agency</td> <td>MoAFRD- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>AUAI-Association of Water user for Irrigation</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>DEF-Danube Environmental Forum</td> </tr> </table>			MoEWM– Ministry of Environment and Water Management	RW-Romanian Waters	NEPA - National Environmental Protection Agency	MoPH-Ministry of Public Health	REPA - Regional Environmental Protection Agency	MoET- Ministry of Economy and Trade	LEPA – Local Environmental Protection Agency	MoAFRD- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development		AUAI-Association of Water user for Irrigation		DEF-Danube Environmental Forum
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List of national Activities in Serbia, under DRP component 3.4

Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project, Project Output 3.4

Priority	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)	Stakeholders to be involved (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
1	<p>1. Development of Manual (on Serbian) for Officials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion on outline with officials and key NGO-one day meeting and collection of the comments-creation of the Project Network of officials and key NGO • 1st draft version • sent draft version to the created Project Network of Officials and key NGO the network of the officials • 1-day meeting to discuss draft version or presentation on capacity building meeting for officials (Nr 3) finalize the draft based on the reactions from the capacity building seminar meeting • final version • dissemination 	<p>Manual for Officials</p> <p>Activity 1. Authors –Two National experts and international expertise provided from REC, NYU, RFF</p> <p>Activity 2: Defining structure/outline of manuals (prepared by experts)-consultations with international experts (REC, NYU, RF) Prepare 1st draft (consultants) Consultations-meeting with int. parties and collection of comments on 1st draft (interested parties: MAFW-WD, MSEP-DEP , MH, MCI-WT, MEM, Special Institutions: RHMI, EPA, IPN, etc. Public Water Management Companies Health Institutes RHI & CI University authorities NGOs)</p> <p>Activity 3. REC (design, printing and publishing) -Editing and proof reading (individuals REC’s contractors)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministries (MAFW-WD, MSEP-DEP , MH, MCI-WT, MEM,) - SEPSDAP Vojvodina - Special Institutions (RHMI, EPA, RSI, IPN, etc.) - Public Water Management Companies - Health Institutes (RHI & CI) - University authorities - NGOs
2	<p>2. Development of Brochure (up to 15 pages) for NGO and Public - extract/summary-information prepared for the public of certain parts from manuals where to find information? from whom?, etc.)</p>	<p>Brochure</p> <p>Activity 1. Selection of the experts</p> <p>Activity 2. Defining the structure (National expert)/outline in</p>	F

Priority	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)	Stakeholders to be involved (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of the authors • Drafting • Discussion on a draft-meeting organizes together with the outline discussion meeting in the first activity • editing • design • proof reading • printing • dissemination of the brochure: publishing on web-dissemination through the networks, sent by regular mail to the NGOs 	cooperation with international experts (REC, NYU, RFF) Activity 3. Development of the Brochure for NGO and Public	
3	<p>Capacity building seminars</p> <p>1. Capacity building workshops for Officials Two Capacity building two days seminar in Novi Sad and Nis for Officials and key NGOs (altogether 60 participants). “Public Participation and Access to Information on water related issues”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentation of the draft Manual for the Officials and collection of the suggestions • presentation of new set of laws in Serbia and legal projects ongoing (draft laws) and their practical implementation <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of the participants and venue • realization of the seminar 	<p><i>Capacity building seminar for Officials:</i></p> <p>Activity 1 Development of the Agenda, venue, time (REC and Facilitators)</p> <p>Activity 2 Preparation of the presentations and working groups (REC and experts who were working on Manual Selection of the facilitator (REC)</p> <p>Activity 3 Identification of the participants (REC CO in cooperation with MAFW-WD and MSEP-DEP)</p> <p>Activity 4 Sending invitations (RECCO)</p> <p>Activity 5 Realization of the seminar (REC CO, experts, facilitators)</p> <p><i>Capacity building seminar for the NGO and Public</i></p> <p>Activity 1 Development of the Agenda (REC-Facilitator)</p> <p>Activity 2</p>	Same as in 1 st National activity + local authorities from cities where seminar will be held + local NGO as well as NGOs from National and Operational team, NGO from Demonstration project+ municipal Public Health Institutes, water related institutes and Municipal representatives from Bor (Pilot project)

Priority	Activity/List of steps (Please describe the activity and bullet point the steps)	Responsible/Who will implement (Name the organization, institution, department, person)	Stakeholders to be involved (Name the organization, institution, department, person)
	<p>2. Capacity building seminar for NGOs</p> <p>(one day-30 participants) organized back to back with the seminar for the Officials in Novi Sad with one joint session with officials!</p>	<p>Preparation of the presentations (National expert who were working on Brochure and other resource persons (presenting good practices on water related information/participation issues-NGO from Slovenia/Hungary and NGO from Bor-Demonstration project</p> <p>Activity 3 Identification of the participants and sending information (REC CO)</p> <p>Activity 4 Realization of the seminar, realization of the one session together with officials Capacity building workshop (REC, Experts, facilitators)</p>	
<p>Abbreviations:</p> <p>MAFW-WD – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water, Directorate for Water MSEP-DEP – Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection, Directorate for environmental Protection MH-Ministry of Health MCI-WT-Ministry of Capital Investment MEM-Ministry of Energy and Mining SEPSDAP Vojvodina- Secretariat for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina</p> <p>RHMI- Republican Hydro Meteorological Institution EPA – Environmental Protection Agency IPN-Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia Health Institutes (RHI & CI) NYU-New York University of Law RF-Resources for Future REC-Regional Environmental Centre</p>			



Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making

Component 3.4 of the Danube Regional Project

PROJECT: Inclusion Of Citizens, Ngos, Industry And Relevant Authorities In Decision Process Related To Water Quality In Lukavac, October 2005 – October 2006

NGO: Ecological Association Of Citizens “Eko-Zeleni” Lukavac, Husejin Keran (Project Leader)

COUNTRY: Bosnia (Lukavac City)

Project Background:

Lukavac City is a large industrial center near Modrac Lake, an artificial lake accumulated from the Spreča and Turija Rivers. Modrac Lake is used for both industrial purposes in Tuzla and Lukavac, as well as drinking water for Lukavac residents. The lake is polluted directly by several Lukavac City industrial sites and villages surrounding it which dump untreated waste and domestic pollutants into the river. It is also polluted indirectly by the Spreča River, which picks up pollution from the city of Spreča on its way to Modrac Lake. Finally, when the Spreča River floods the surrounding countryside, particularly when flood water is combined with Modrac Lake water, surrounding villages are subject to contaminated drinking water as well. The effects of pollution on flora, fauna, and human health are unknown. The local municipalities and other relevant authorities do not have an adequate or accurate overview of what pollutants are present in the river, lake, and drinking water, or a clear picture of who has what information and what additional information should be produced. They need assistance in filling in gaps in this information, particularly in regards to cooperating with other authorities.

Goals and Overall Objectives

FACILITATING COOPERATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

- To stimulate the authorities to work with each other and other stakeholders to map existing and missing water related information.

ACCESSING AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- To improve public access to information by assessing what information is available from authorities and stakeholders with regard to water issues in the Lukavac area. Once this is accomplished, the project will help to set up a system for the exchange of water-related information between authorities and try to develop a plan whereby such information can be made available (both actively and passively) to citizens.

INCREASING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

- To improve the condition of citizens' participation in water-related decision-making. The project will stimulate a dialogue that could bring about possible solutions to such problems as water quality.

How to get there – Specific Activities

- **INTERVIEW, QUESTIONNAIRES, AND ROUNDTABLE**

In order to find out the current situation relative to water-related information, interviews will be conducted with relevant authorities. The public will be able to attend and ask questions. Secondly, Eco-Green volunteers will conduct questionnaires with local residents to determine their interest in acquiring water-related information and their level of current participation in environmental decision-making. Lastly, a roundtable will be conducted with relevant parties to discuss the findings of interviews and the questionnaire and brainstorm about possible solutions. Information from best practices in other countries will be considered. The possibility of training government workers on access to information provisions will be brought forth as a possible step in improving the situation. Finally, if authorities agree, water will be sampled to determine its pollution category according to national categories (1 to 4). Findings of all three activities will be made available to the public through reports disseminated to the media and through the web and other classical information dissemination methods.

- **ANALYSIS OF SPREČA RIVER**

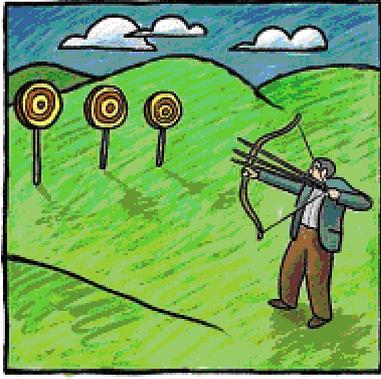
Independent expertise will provide information on the river's water category in order to help citizens, NGOs, industry, and government understand the river's current quality status according to categories set by BiH law. Workshops will be held to inform all relevant parties of results obtained, and to assist authorities on how to process information and make it available to citizens. Possible changes in information dissemination will be discussed, possibly implemented, and assessed in a second workshop.

- **RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

The outcomes of discussions, capacity building, proposed possible changes, and the river analysis will be communicated to the public through a brochure. The public will be encouraged to provide feedback on the project.

Outcomes

In summary, this project will assess the current status of information access at the government level, inform the public about project results, gather information on the current quality of Spreča's water, and attempt to facilitate change through collaborative means.



Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making, Component 3.4 of the Danube Regional Project

Project: The Right to Know and to Participate in Water Management, October 2005 – October 2006

NGO: Association for Useful Activities “Ecomission 21 Century,” Nelly Miteva (Project Leader)

Country: Bulgaria (-Lovech & Troyan Counties)

Project Background

According to a recent report from the Executive Environmental Agency (2005), the Osam River is the most polluted in Bulgaria. However, the people of the Lovech and Troyan Counties are not adequately informed about how the watershed is managed, and how they can gain access to environmental information, even though they are quite active in other areas of social and economic life. While industry is not the only cause of pollution, it is believed that Lesoplast plant, which operates without an IPPC permit, contributes significantly to the problem. Another plant, Actavis in Troyan, has recently been issued a permit but the public has not been informed of the conditions and effects of this permit. Ecomission 21 Century is addressing these problems through assessment, awareness raising, and capacity building.

Goals and Overall Objectives

- IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

The Bulgarian Law for Access to information has been in operation since 2000. However, execution is not standardized among institutions. Preliminary assessment would identify gaps in how the law is implemented at the local level and suggest changes.

- STRENGTHENING THE INTERACTION BETWEEN NGOS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

NGOs don't necessarily know how to access information. As well, local authorities need to improve their ability to handle requests. Workshops will address these issues.

- INCREASING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

Information is the first step towards participation. Getting information requires access – the gaps against which must be overcome. Through a combination of improving access procedures and informing the public of water-related concerns, public participation will be improved.

How to Get There – Specific Activities

- PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

In order to address barriers to accessing environmental information, they must be determined. Therefore, an access to information request will be made to the Municipalities of Lovech and

Troyan, the Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water-Pleven and the Danube River Basin Directorate, and the Regional Inspectorate of the Protection and Control of Human Health (Troyan and Lovech). Access requests will include data on water quality and human health, pollution sources and risks, a copy of the complex permit of Actavis and information on the monitoring of fulfilling permit requirements.

- **WORKSHOPPING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

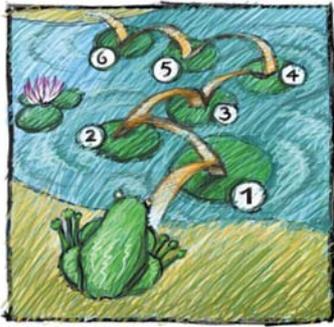
A workshop will be held for representatives of the appropriate country governments and water authorities in order to discuss the current state of access to information based on the first trial access request. Suggestions for improvement will be discussed and a draft proposal for change will be formulated. Afterwards, a second access request will be made to test improvements. After this second request, another workshop will be held to formalize proposed changes, the details of which will be distributed via CDs to other municipalities. Flowing out of the second workshop, public information on access to information will be distributed through internet networks and a brochure.

- **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Water quality, human health, and access difficulties will be communicated to the public through media coverage to increase awareness of water issues facing communities.

Outcomes

In essence, this project is about testing the Bulgarian Law for Access to Information. Where information is not accessible, concrete steps will be proposed to combat this through capacity building and improving communication between NGOs and governments. At the county level, the project team will strive for local governments to commit to improving public participation mechanisms. At the national level, the project team will encourage the national government to see that the good practices and ameliorative proposals for transparent water management and access to information coming out of this project will be applied to different counties and water basins.



Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making, Component 3.4 of the Danube Regional Project

Project: Osijek Water Forum – Enhancing public involvement in waste water management, October 2005 – October 2006

NGO: Green Osijek Ecological Association, Jasmin Sadikovic (Project Leader)

Country: Croatia (Osijek)

Project Background

In Osijek, Croatia, 500,000 l of waste water is pumped almost directly into the River Drava, untreated, every day. Sometime in the future, a treatment plant will be built – but its structure and function relative to environmental and human health remain unformulated and thus a source of some concern for Osijek residents. In nearby Cebin, citizens are having their own problems with the water management practices of the local oil factory. Before 2002, the Cebin Oil Factory pumped its wastewater into drainage canals, influencing Cebin residents' agricultural production and drinking water. By alerting the local and national media, ecological NGO **Green Osijek** put a stop to the factory's practices. However, current information on company practices remains locked behind plant doors. Indeed, the ensuing media scandal didn't solve the larger structural problems that continue to affect Osijek and Cebin residents alike – there is a widespread lack of waste water management, civic transparency, and public participation in environmental decision-making in the region.

In the interests of mobilizing public concern in relation to environmental transparency and the need for ecologically sound solutions to waste water management, Green Osijek is taking a leading role in combating environmental inaccessibility. Specifically, they propose to address the need for improvement in access to information and public participation with regard to the above mentioned issues.

Goals and Overall Objectives

- FOLLOWING THE DECISION PROCESS CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

This project supports efforts to control and regularly monitor the level of pollution in the Drava River by setting up a transparent and efficient planning process for decision on the construction and operation of a waste water treatment plant.

- HARMONIZING CROATIA'S WATER LAWS WITH THE EU'S WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

This project adopts and implements the **Croatian Water Law** in line with the EU Water Framework Directive, which is striving to achieve a better status for all of Europe's surface and ground waters and requires the public to be informed of definitions of river basin characteristics, and actively involved in the drafting and implementation of river basin management plans and future programs.

- PROMOTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AARHUS-SYNCRONIZED ACCESS TO INFORMATION LEGISLATION

This project promotes the implementation of the **Law of the Right to Access to Information**, new Croatian legislation which is a bold step towards both reinforcing the first pillar of the **Aarhus Convention** relating to ensuring access to environmental information and moving further towards the Convention's ratification.

How to Get There - Specific Activities

The objectives above require specific action. Thus, this project will undertake the following:

- ESTABLISHING THE OSIJEK WATER FORUM

A Water Forum will be established through a series of three roundtables with identified stakeholders, including state institutions responsible for water management issues ("Croatian Waters" and Water Pipeline Osijek), local governments (City of Osijek, Osijek – Baranja County), private sector representatives (Cepin Oil Factory), environmental NGO's (Green Osijek, Green Action, fishermen associations, other environmentally relevant groups active on local level), and educational institutions (i.e. University of Technology for Food Production). Preliminary tasks of the Forum will include developing the mechanisms for public involvement and information sharing, and setting and finalizing protocols of conduct for Forum activities with the approval of stakeholders and the responsible water authorities. It is expected that the Forum will grow to become a permanent platform for Osijek regional communication about water issues. Green Osijek will facilitate between interest groups involved in the network until a permanent secretariat can be developed.

- DEVELOPING A PUBLIC OUTREACH POSTER

A poster will be published to raise awareness about existing pollution problems in the area, possible solutions, including the need for a wastewater treatment plant and where information can be found regarding these issues. It will also contain a short description of the Osijek Water Forum project. The poster will be disseminated in public institutions, schools, NGO's etc. It is designed to spur public interest, and potential involvement in water management issues. The poster will be prepared by Green Osijek in cooperation with the Osijek town and local water authorities.

- ENGAGING IN MEDIA OUTREACH

The Osijek Water Forum project will be presented to the local media. Dalibor Radman, a journalist from the *Glas Slavonije*, a daily newspaper in the region, will facilitate this process as a member of Green Osijek. The project activities will be covered regularly throughout different phases of the project.

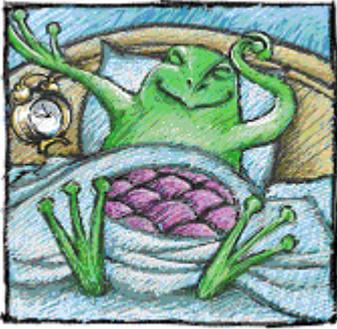
- CONTRIBUTING TO INTERNATIONAL WATER DAY

On 22nd of March 2006, International Water Day, a "street action" will be organized. Project organizers will set up a kiosk/panel displaying promotional project and water-related materials.

Citizens will receive information on how to save water, as well as facts and figures on communal water, examples of good European practice, and how and where to access information. Different water-related institutions would be asked to present themselves, describing their work and role in water management, problems and possible solutions.

Outcomes

In summary then, over the course of the Osijek Water Forum project, project organizers would like to establish a functional Water Forum with all of the attendant networking required to commence such a Forum as well as maintain its continued integrity. Throughout this process, public education and access to water-related environmental information is key, and will provide the right sort of momentum to contribute to public participation in the decision-making process so that activities like the ongoing construction of a waste water treatment plant will encounter and respond to public concerns. In the end, relevant knowledge and experience must be exchanged and implemented in a way that accounts for local circumstances. In this way, broad but ambitious directives like the Water Framework Directive to clean of Europe's water's by 2015 and the three pillars of Aarhus Convention, specifically the right to access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision making, can be realized in an affective and appropriate way.



Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making, Component 3.4 of the Danube Regional Project

PROJECT: Taking Care Of The River Together With Its Beneficiaries: Improving The Flow Of Information And Public Involvement In Water Management Through The Capacity Building Of Diverse Interest Groups, September 2005 – September 2006

NGO: Focus Eco Center, Zoltan Hajdu (Project Leader)

COUNTRY: Romania (Tirgu Mures)

Project Background

The Mures River Basin, specifically the River surrounding the city of Tirgu Mures, is severely polluted. From upstream, the river is affected by the Reghin water treatment station and pig farms from Gornesti. Tirgu Mures' own water treatment station contributes to this pollution. As well, artificial fertilizers, industrial plants, and agricultural and rural runoff contribute further to this pollution. These influences have significantly impacted residents in Tirgu Mures and Iernut, who derive their drinking water from the river. In fact, the cost of drinking water in Tirgu Mures is one of the most expensive in Romania because the cost of cleaning the water is so expensive. The groundwater is also polluted – which is very critical because in the rural areas of the basin individuals use wells to obtain their drinking water.

Quick Facts: The full length of the Mures River is 789 km. Of that, 761 km lies on the Romanian territory. The Mures catchments basin is 29,500 km² large, 27,890 km² of which is in Romania.

In recent years, the Mures River Basin acted as a technical pilot area for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, which requires EU countries to organize water management at the basin level.

Although relevant decision-making processes are done in accordance with Romanian legislation, the process is still lacking appropriate access to information and public participation mechanisms. The NGOs at the national level expressed their concerns that the selection of the representatives did not happen in an appropriate way. They expressed concerns about selection time and consultation. Given that Romania will likely become a member of the EU in 2007, the time for fine tuning the public participation and access components of the WFD is short, but the need is significant.

Goals and Overall Objectives

CREATING A BETTER INTEGRATED MODEL FOR NGO PARTICIPATION IN THE RIVER BASIN COMMITTEES (RBCs)

- RBCs are a rather new water management bodies for Romania. Given this the project's findings and proposed approaches are key to increasing public participation within RBCs so that the NGOs participation is improved and Water Framework Directive is adequately implemented.

ASSISTING THE MURES RIVER BASIN COMMITTEE IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

- Pending the appropriate consent, attempts will be made to improve public participation mechanisms relative to the WFD in order to build the capacities of River Basin Committees.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

- Inform the public about environmental pollution, including specific information about discharge points, diffuse pollution sources, levels and types of pollutants, and the effects of pollution on environmental and human health.

How to get there – Specific Activities

- *WATER MANAGEMENT INFORMATION COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION*

According to the **Aarhus Convention**, stakeholders have a right to be informed and involved in the RBC planning process. In the case of the Mures River Basin, this process needs to be improved. Thus, project organizers will collect information about best practices in water management throughout the EU, particularly in regards to water basin management organization, collect information on how the Mures RBC actually works, and distribute this information to relevant stakeholders.

- **LOBBYING THE RBC**

The RBC is in need of better NGO representation. Thus project organizers and relevant stakeholders from the NGO community will strive to improve the NGO participation in the Mures Water Basin Committee meetings. The Water Authority will be lobbied regarding current NGO selection criteria, and alternative procedures will be recommended. A guide – entitled “How to work together” – will be circulated to facilitate further cooperation through the description of best practices in integrated water management based on successful case studies.

- *TRAINING NGOS AND WATER AUTHORITIES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES*

NGOs and civil servants from the Water Authority and EPA will be invited to participate in workshops which will provide training on effective public participation according to provisions of WFD. The technical implementation of the WFD will be addressed in parallel workshops involving separate financing resources.

- **INVOLVING NGOS AND THE PUBLIC**

In the interest of involving the public in project activities, a database of affected parties (NGOs, CBOs, small communities, private companies, etc.) will be created both to better inform them of ongoing project activities and to identify parties with an active interest in the elaboration and outcome of the project. These latter groups will be encouraged to participate in information dissemination and take an active role in decision-making processes, particularly in regards to future NGO representation on RBCs. Special attention will be paid to the Niraj River basin (a sub-basin of the Mures River), whose stakeholders are in the process of working out water

management plans. Finally, project staff will organize an awareness raising event on all of these issues for Water Day 2006.

- *PROVIDING A MODEL FOR POSSIBLE USE IN OTHER RIVER BASINS*

This project it is an important step for the integrated river management program of Focus Eco Center, and an important step towards public participation in water management in Romania. The selection procedure of NGO representatives elaborated during the project will be debated by the NGO community at the national level and will be proposed for use in the other 10 Romanian river basins. Thus project organizers will meet and evaluate the program and inform the media of current outcomes and future impacts of the project. They will also use the networks established during the project to maintain adequate communication between stakeholders as water basin management continues to be elaborated throughout the region.

Outcomes

In summary then, this project will accomplish three overarching objectives. It will build a network of stakeholders, particularly from the NGO sector, with an interest in water basin management. It will propose a better model of public engagement and NGO selection, lobby Water Authorities to this end, and build the capacity of NGOs and civil servants in dealing with transparent water management, accessible information, and efficient public participation. In the end, it will test and share good practices in the Mures River with regard to access to information and public participation.



Enhancing Access to Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making, Component 3.4 of the Danube Regional Project

PROJECT: Demonstration Project In Bor, Serbia And Montenegro, September 2005 – September 2006

NGO: Association Of Young Researchers Bor, Toplica Marjanovic (Project Leader)

COUNTRY: Serbia And Montenegro (Bor)

Project Background

Bor is a mining industrial center in east Serbia, S&M in which industrial discharges and domestic sewage pollute water currents, river coasts, and surroundings – particularly in the Bor and Krivelj Rivers. In terms of total waste water, about 45%, or around 9 million m³, is attributed to mining and metallurgy in the form of leaching from pits and ground waters. While some of the discharges from metallurgy could be managed in less damaging ways, there are currently no facilities for wastewater treatment in Bor. Wastewater from Bor endangers the county of Bor, as well as other river-based communities in Serbia and Bulgaria, significantly influencing the quality of water in the West Balkans and Danube Basin. Even though technologies to improve the situation are known and applied in other countries, and the commitment of different stakeholders to environmental democracy has been demonstrated in the adoption of a Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) and a District Environment Action Plan (DEAP) in 2003 and 2004 respectively, authorities still lack the money, equipment, and information to facilitate the control of water quality.

Access to information needs to be improved through the training of authorities on such things as managing information requests and disseminating information quickly. EU directives and other provisions that could bring about better water management, access to information, and public participation in environmental decision-making are less known to local authorities, public companies, businesses, expert institutions and interested citizens. Overall then, this project will address weakness at the local level in terms of access to environmental information, and public participation in environmental decision-making.

Goals and Overall Objectives

- STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND INPUT

The project must identify all interested stakeholders and form a stakeholder group which will work towards solving problems in gathering and utilizing wastewater information and enabling public participation in environmental decision-making.

- BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The project will attempt to improve the skills and capacity of local authority in collecting and disseminating information.

- NETWORKING AND TRAINING NGOs TO ACCESS INFORMATION

The project will train NGOs to access information and to network with each other on waste water issues.

- INFORMING THE PUBLIC ABOUT WATER QUALITY AND ACCESS PROCEDURES

Finally, the project must raise public awareness of water pollution problems, informing the public about possible routes to access information and helping to facilitate communication between public and local authorities

How to get there – Specific Activities

- PROJECT KICKOFF, ROUNDTABLE AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

After starting the project off with media coverage and initial meetings with relevant organizations and institutions, a roundtable will be held in which the interests of participants, their expectations, and their current sources (if any) of information on water issues in the region will be assessed. From this introduction, priorities will be set in terms of public information access and distribution. As well, information on current access will be funneled into public information materials.

- CREATING COLLECTION POINTS FOR GATHERING, PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION

Building on former projects, this project will facilitate the operation of collection points for gathering, processing, and distributing information about water issues to the public. After the project finishes, municipal authorities will take an active role in collection point maintenance.

- CREATING A WASTEWATER/DRINKING WATER INFORMATION DATABASE AND INFORMATION NETWORK

The project will create a database of information on waste water and drinking water information in the hopes of increasing the amount of public information about environmental problems. The project will also establish a special network through mailing lists, discussion forums, and the web in order to facilitate maximum information exchange between interested parties in regions affected by the Bor region and other regions facing similar problems.

- TRAINING LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In the interests of qualifying for the **Water Framework Directive** and the **Aarhus Convention** – both of which place public access to information and participation on environmental decision-making at the forefront of environmental solutions – stakeholders will choose candidates for training on both the WFD and AC in terms of regional and national level implementation, funding pending.

Outcomes

In summary, this project aims to increase public information about wastewater problems and bring about a greater likelihood of public participation to solve these problems. Project expect to do this through a series of activities, including awareness raising campaigns and electronic networking, improving the capacities of NGOs and local authority to apply for and respond to access to information requests respectively, and developing concrete methods and procedures for securing public access to information. It is hoped that the lessons learned in this experience can be incorporated into other municipalities facing similar problems. In the end, project staff would like to further the incorporation of the access to information and public participation components of the WFD and AC into Serbia and Montenegro