

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF  
INTERNATIONAL RIVER BASINS PROJECT**

EUROPEAID/131360/C/SER/MULTI



This project is funded by  
the European Union

# Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project

**4<sup>th</sup> NCC Meeting Yerevan, Armenia  
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Project progress and results 2014

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## Project Objectives

To improve water quality in the transboundary river basins of the wider Black Sea region and Belarus

- To improve availability and quality of data on the ecological, chemical, and hydro-morphological status of trans-boundary river basins including groundwater
- To develop River Basin Management Plans for selected river basins / sub-river basins according to the requirements of the WFD

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## Project Progress

Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> RSCM the project team undertook a comprehensive review of project implementation, developing a new project timeline, logframe and incidental budget. As a result the project was refocused with more emphasis placed on the development of the River Basin Management Plans and immediate implementation of the basin pilot projects

The level of activity and input by the project team has been increased significantly during the past twelve months and will be maintained until the end of project in January 2016.

In order to better match expertise to project demands, there have been a number changes made to the project team personnel, including a new Key Expert 3, Romina Alvares, biologist.

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## Monitoring Programme Development Progress

Under task 1, development of WFD compliant monitoring programmes, focus over the last twelve months has been on:

- Collection of reference data to establish a regional/sub-regional ecological status classification system
- Drafting guidelines for national monitoring programmes for hydro-morphology, chemical status and groundwaters
- Country strategies for development of WFD compliant monitoring programmes
- Development of information management tools (Danube GIS)
- Training in monitoring and monitoring programme development

This project is implemented by a Consortium led by Hulla and Co. Human Dynamics KG



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## Monitoring Programme Development

The development of an ecological status classification system is a complex and lengthy exercise, which the project has initiated but will not complete. In the last twelve months the project has undertaken two lots of joint field surveys (SW and GW) to establish and verify water body reference sites across the region and a further four lots of surveys in the Caucasus as a follow up from Kura II.

Initial work on the establishment of EQRs for selected water bodies and identification of correlations between the biological and hydro-morphological parameters and general conditions has been undertaken and will be continued in early 2015 following analysis of results of the 2014 surveys. A regional workshop to present and discuss draft proposals will be held in spring 2015 and final proposals will be made by September 2015.

The project will undertake a third round of SW JFS in 2015 to assist with development of the Ecological Status Classification system. The surveys will be undertaken in the EPIRB and Kura III pilot basins.

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## Monitoring Programme Development

Monitoring programme design and development guidelines have been prepared and translated for hydro-morphology and groundwaters and are under preparation for chemical status. These documents will provide the basic design principles for the monitoring programmes incorporated into the RBMPs. A full set of guidelines will be available in early 2015.

Country strategies for development of WFD compliant monitoring programmes for Ukraine and Moldova were developed in October 2013 and revised in July 2014. These strategies are aimed at helping the countries define their next steps in implementation of the WFD. The non-key expert, Paul Buijs, completed missions to the other four countries in October and will prepare draft strategies for comment in January 2015.

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## Monitoring Programme Development

The project is required by the ToR to assist in development of an Information Management System for WFD compliant monitoring data. At the last Steering Committee meeting rather than establish a new system it was agreed the project would instead adapt existing systems and develop new component data management tools. As a first step, the project commissioned a new set of GIS maps for the pilot basins, making them consistent, and the loading of the available pilot basin data onto the Danube GIS platform.

Previously the project delivered on-site QA.QC training to the participating laboratories and monitoring training during the Joint Field Surveys. In addition, a two day hydro-morphological training course was held in the Caucasus and the East European sub-regions in July and September 2013 respectively. In spring 2015 practical biological monitoring training will be provided in the Caucasus, and the River Prut and Dnieper basins, covering different ecological quality elements (phytoplankton, macrophytes and fish). Finally, theoretical training will be delivered in early 2015 on development of ecological status classification systems.

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## River Basin Management Planning Progress

Under task 2, Development of River Basin Management Plans, in the last twelve months the following progress has been made.

Contracts for the development of draft pilot RBMP with ToR fully compliant with the WFD were let to national consultants in all pilot basins in early 2014. The delivery target for the production and distribution of draft RBMPs is the beginning of 2015. The plans will be subject to public consultation and adoption over the following nine months.

Project team has guided the RBMP process through a series of workshops (overview, P&I and At Risk assessment, EQOs and PoM and finalisation). There has been close monitoring of the consultants' output to ensure not only compliance but also consistency of results.

As inputs to the draft RBMPs, the project team is finalising the water body delineation and typology, design of the pilot basin monitoring plans (draft plans sent to countries) and RBMP communication strategies.

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## River Basin Management Planning Progress

The RBMP Gap Filling surveys, scheduled this autumn, have been postponed until spring 2015 because of a congested timeline. The results of the Gap Filling will be incorporated into the final draft RBMP in 2015.

The RBMP contracts will be extended until the end of 2015 and will allow the contractors to assist with revision of the RBMP during the consultation process and incorporate the survey results.

River Prut RBMPs are being developed in parallel in Moldova and Ukraine and efforts will be made to combine them with the Romanian River Prut RBMP into a single plan.

The countries have selected pilot projects drawn from an initial Programme of Measures to a value of 80K euro at both basin and national levels. The pilots, with the exception of two, one in Ukraine and one in Azerbaijan, have been tendered and are now under implementation. Early results will feed into the draft RBMPs.

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## River Basin Management Planning Results

The work over the last twelve months has engaged the countries in the RBMP process, and through project guidance notes and workshops has increased capacity in WFD implementation and established the planning cycle.

The pilot projects have enabled the countries to address long-standing issues and problems which due to budget constraints have been ignored. The pilots have given the RBMP plans a reality - they are no longer just project documents to be put on the shelf.

The RBMPs have momentum and they a good opportunity to be adopted in a number if not all of the beneficiary countries within the timeframe of the project.

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## Project Summary

- The project is being implemented to the 2013 revised programme and logframe and is currently approximately 1 month behind schedule.
- The draft RBMPs will be delivered for publication at beginning of February 2015 allowing twelve months for public consultation.
- The biological monitoring training programme and Gap Filling surveys have been postponed until spring 2015; this will not affect the project delivery timeline.
- Monitoring guidelines and regional ecological status classification system proposals will be in place in late spring 2015.
- Incidental expenditure is on budget.

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***Thank you for your attention***



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