

UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project Activities supporting River Basin Management Planning in the Sava Basin

Background to the GEF Strategic Partnership

In 2002 GEF launched its largest project in the area of International Waters – GEF Strategic Partnership for the Danube and Black Sea, with 95 Million USD grant for period 2001-2007.

16 nations of the Danube – Black Sea region requested GEF and its Implementing Agencies to initiate this Partnership consisting of capital investments, economic instruments, development of environmental policies and legal instruments, strengthening of public participation, and monitoring of trends and compliance, all measures for pollution control and nutrient reduction over the period of 2001 to 2007 for the countries of the Danube-Black Sea basin.

The long-term objective is for all Black Sea basin countries to take measures to reduce nutrient levels and other hazardous substances to such levels necessary to permit Black Sea ecosystems to recover to similar conditions as those observed in the 1960s. The intermediate objective of the Partnership includes the implementation of urgent control measures by all countries in the Black Sea basin to avoid that discharges of nitrogen and phosphorus to the Black Sea exceed those levels observed in 1997. Through the formulation process, six objectives with indicators of success were adopted by the 16 nations for this Strategic initiative for the duration of the Partnership.

The Partnership represents the GEF's commitment to assist the 14 recipient countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Serbia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russian Federation, Georgia and Turkey) in the basin addressing, as the highest transboundary priority, nutrient reduction. The GEF assistance is designed as three complementary components:

- The GEF Black Sea Ecosystems Recovery Project implemented by UNDP, with the assistance of UNEP and in cooperation with the BSC;
- The GEF Danube Regional Project implemented by UNDP and in cooperation with the ICPDR; and
- The GEF/World Bank Partnership Investment Fund for Nutrient Reduction focused on country nutrient reduction investments.

Over the period of 2001-2007, the Partnership aims at catalysing capital investments, economic instruments, development and enforcement of environmental law and policy, strengthening of public participation, and monitoring of trends and compliance for the 16 countries of the Danube/Black Sea basin.

The main objectives of the Partnership are:

- Adopting and implementing of new policies, institutional and regulatory measures for nutrient reduction,

- Implementing investment projects for water pollution reduction,
- Capacity building for water pollution management including monitoring systems,
- Adopting of legal mechanisms at national and regional level (Conventions) to control nutrient releases to the Black Sea,
- Reinforcing international cooperation for nutrient reduction measures,
- Implementing pilot project for nutrient reduction with active involvement of stakeholders.

The GEF/World Bank Investment Fund for Nutrient Reduction (IFNR) is an integral part of the Partnership, focusing on key projects in the region and is actively engaging other stakeholders, including national and local governments, EU assistance programmes (PHARE, ISPA, CARDS, TACIS, CADSES), and IFIs in co-financing nutrient reduction centred interventions.

14 countries of the Black Sea and Danube Basin are eligible for GEF funding under the Investment Fund. These are, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine. The IF portfolio includes 14 projects in 10 of these countries. Six of these projects are under implementation and the rest at various stages of preparation.

The portfolio is well diversified among eligible areas of investment that were specified in the Partnership Framework Brief. Specifically, there are seven Agricultural Pollution Control (APC) Projects (in Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Russia Krasnodar, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine); one wetland restoration project (in Bulgaria), one ICZM project (in Ukraine), and five municipal wastewater treatment projects (in Hungary, Bosnia, Moldova, Russia Rostov and Ukraine). It should also be noted that some of the projects include more than one eligible element. For example, the Moldova APC Project and the Serbia Enterprise Pollution Reduction Project also support investments for reducing nutrient discharges from agro-industrial enterprises, such as slaughterhouses and meat-processing facilities, in addition to proper farm nutrient management. Furthermore, the Hungary Nutrient Reduction Project will support the restoration of wetlands in the Danube-Drava National Park Gemenc of the Buda-Karapanca Region. This reflects the IF's flexible nature that allows for tailoring project interventions to each country's specific conditions with respect to nutrient pollution.

UNDP/GEF DRP Support to the Sava River Basin

The UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project supports the development of a pilot management plan for the Sava River Basin as a model for river basin management planning in line with the EU Water Framework Directive. In Phase I (April to December 2003), a first situation analysis was carried out, examining the availability of information and data, and assessing institutional capacities to develop a Sava River Basin Management Plan. As a follow-up, in

Phase II, the focus of work will be on sustainable capacity building of national institutions as well as on filling in gaps in data production and management required by the EU WFD.

There are four main tasks, which will be carried out in Croatia, Bosnia & Hercegovina and Serbia under the DRP by an international consultants team:

Task 1: Gap analysis for the completion of the Danube RR and assistance to current WFD activities

Task 1.1.: Gap Analysis for WFD implementation in the Sava RB

Objective: *Identify the most important gaps of information and capacity to implement the WFD, specifically the Danube Roof Report and the upcoming Sava Roof Report.*

The priority areas for assistance will include Groundwater (classification, delineation esp. in karst situations, risk assessment, information gaps); Surface water (point and diffuse pollution, hydro-morphological alterations, HMWB, reference conditions, risk analysis); Economic analysis of water use for the RR reporting; and Socio-economic aspects for the preparation of the RBMP in the transboundary context (HMWB and other exemptions, new modifications - navigation), cost-effectiveness of measures, cost recovery.

WFD Templates (originally developed by ICPDR and tested for the Danube Roof Report and the Tisza River Basin) will be used to assess *availability and quality* of WFD-required data and information to conclude the Gap Analysis in summer 2006 and to specify more exactly the assistance needed for each of the beneficiary countries. These can be further used by the Beneficiaries and Sava Commission for future development.

Task 1.2.: Assistance on selected WFD Issues

Objective: *Support the three Sava countries in their concrete WFD reporting, addressing selected issues and using different assistance tools.*

Based on the main topics of assistance identified, prioritised and specified through the Gap Analysis, the assistance will be provided through transfer of international experience with WFD reporting via:

- **in-situ working sessions** closely linked to the CARDS Sava project: Relevant **Technical** (subject-specific) **CARDS workshops** are planned for May and October 2006 on Pressures, Economic Analysis, Socio-economic aspects and on Hydromorphological Alterations, HWMB.
- **interactive working sessions in Vienna** (Federal Environment Agency). A small group of national government experts will present their reporting problems to a number of different EU experts available in Vienna. This action will allow more detailed expert discussions as well as reflections how to best cooperate at Sava basin level with the WFD reporting. Working Sessions are planned in September, topics of these sessions will depend in the results of the detail gap analysis, but may include groundwater, GIS, institutional set up.
- **electronic Workshop Follow-up** to the national government experts. This is meant as a communication service where the items and procedures presented and discussed in workshops and meetings before can be checked and improved in the following months (all governments plan to finish their national WFD reports in December 2006 to the ICPDR). This interactive support (i.e. mails with questions) is based on the completion of draft national WFD reports (in English), on interim results in the CARDS pilot projects and on some recent insights of the Intl.

Consultants into the national reporting situation. It is provided without travel and personal meetings of Intl. Consultants per Beneficiary country.

Key outputs

- A Gap Analysis for each Sava country, including the filled-in WFD templates for the Sava RB (limited to meta data). These can be further used by the Beneficiaries and Sava Commission for future development.
- A short report describing the various WFD subjects addressed and the related assistances provided, including – to the extent possible – an evaluation of the success.

Task 2: Support to the Description of Key Transboundary Issues (Pressures and Impacts)

Objective: *Initiate and support the agreement on key transboundary issues for the Sava RB.*

This activity is the first step into preparing the Sava RBM Plan and will be very important for the further work at the Sava level and especially for the Sava Commission. It will be based on similar work done in other river basins (e.g. Rhine, Meuse, Tisza), and make use of documents developed at the ICPDR (incl. GEF-PRP Transboundary Analysis 1999). Based on international experience on developing key transboundary issues, the Intl. Consultants will ask (via a template) the Local Consultants to discuss and develop an initial list of key transboundary issues with the national government experts. The results will be assessed and merged by the Intl. Consultants for discussion and agreement at a regional workshop, tentatively in Sarajevo (as day 1 of a 2.5 days workshop addressing also Task 3).

This process will make use of the Danube key issues (see the related new RBM EG issue paper) at the Sava level. The regional workshop will conclude preliminary key transboundary issues for the Sava basin.

Key output:

- A short report on agreed list of preliminary key transboundary issues for the Sava basin.

Task 3: Support to the Development of Topics for a Programme of Measures

Objective: *Initiate and support the agreement on the topics (strategic priorities) of the future Programme of Measures.*

Taking into account the early stage of WFD implementation in 2006 (compared to the need to prepare an RBMP by 2009), it was agreed with ICPDR and the Beneficiaries that in this GEF Component focus will be on the topics of such Measures that are expected to best contribute to achieve the WFD objectives in the Sava basin in the future. Therefore, the focus of this Task will be on a regional discussion and agreement on the types of such Measures that are best suitable for addressing the key transboundary issues of the Sava region. Again, the development of this Activity will be based on international experience, i.e. the Intl. Consultants will ask (via a template) the Local Consultants to discuss and develop an initial list of types of Measures with the national government experts. The results will be assessed and merged by the Intl. Consultants for making concrete proposals for criteria and contents of the PoM (discussing sub-basin WFD objectives), which then will be discussed and finalised at a regional workshop (tentatively in Sarajevo).

Key output

- Agreed list of preliminary priority types of Measures for the Sava basin. General recommendations on how to develop Sava basin objectives based on Danube basin experience.

Task 4: Structure of the Sava River Basin Management Plan

Objective: *Initiate and support the agreement on the structure of the future Sava RBM Plan.*

Taking into account the early stage of WFD implementation in 2006 (compared to the need to prepare an RBMP by 2009), it was agreed with ICPDR and the Beneficiaries that in this GEF Component a structure for the Sava RBM Plan will be produced. This will be based on the EU (CIS) and ICPDR (Road Map) guidances but also reflect the current Sava results and consultations, i.e. what character/content and quality of such a Plan can be expected by 2009. A draft "Road Map" for the Sava RBM Plan will be prepared, tuned with the new Danube RBMP Road Map.

The draft Sava RBMP structure as well as the proposed Road Map will be presented and discussed at a final, 2-days regional workshop (tentatively in Belgrade). This meeting will also serve to summarise and conclude the overall results of the DRP Component.

The Sava RBM Plan completely in line with EU WFD requirements and ICPDR guidance should be completed by Sava countries (facilitated by the Sava Commission) by 2009. This RBM Plan, together with the related national RBM plans, will serve as the main instruments to start concrete actions with regard to transboundary issues in the Sava river basin and will also constitute the basis for future investments by international and bilateral donors.

Key output:

- Agreed RBMP structure and related Road Map as well as the findings of the reviewed Public Participation Strategy for the Sava basin.

Other UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project Activities in the Sava River Basin

WFD Implementation:

The DRP is providing direct assistance to the MoFTER in Bosnia and Herzegovina through an expert working in the Ministry with a responsibility of co-ordinating WFD activities with the ICPDR, the Ministry and the two entities. In addition the DRP has provided an expert to assist with developing a pragmatic monitoring programme in-line with the expectations of the WFD and consistent with the available budget of the Ministries in BiH.

Agriculture Policy and Pilot Project on BAP

This issue has been the focus of significant projects in both the first and second phase of the DRP to assess the situation on agricultural policy development and the implementation of BAP across the whole basin. This work provided an agreed concept for BAP across the middle and lower Danube countries defined as *'...the highest level of pollution control practices that any farmer could be expected to adopt within their own national, regional and / or local context of the Danube River Basin'*. The first phase identified six strategic aims with eleven objectives for measures to control and reduce agricultural pollution. In

phase 2 of the project the work focussed more on the lower 7 Danube countries (including Serbia and B&H) and developed further the concepts of BAPs.

Phase 2 saw the extension of this approach with the testing of 15 BAPs identified as appropriate for the pilot farms selected (see below). 12 of these BAPs responded to issues of nutrient pollution and 3 to the use of pesticides.

Eight family farms (total area 472 ha with 288 animal units¹ were selected for inclusion in the pilot assessment of BAPs in the Vojvodina region of Serbia. This was one of the potential pilot locations identified in the first phase of the DRP. The pilot farmers received significant assistance from the consultant and were involved in a number of training programmes both within the region and externally. Feedback from the farmers involved has been very positive about the new practices for pollution reduction and farming practices (e.g. soil analysis, use of slurry, financial losses due to poor manure handling, etc.).

The situation on agriculture policy and its enforcement has been assessed with regards to storage and use of manure, fertilisers and pesticides. This has resulted in a number of reports and recommendations provided to assist farmers and agricultural extension services. These assessments have been updated in phase 2 of the DRP for the lower Danube countries and recommendations regarding policy initiatives and the implementation of BAPs are made.

Industrial policy

Phase 1 of the DRP focused on providing an assessment of available legislation and policies for industrial pollution control and the best available techniques to mitigate pollution across the whole Danube Basin. Phase 2 has updated the information on legislation and has addressed the issues in the non-accession countries, including Serbia and B&H. A key output from phase 2 has been the preparation of agreed road maps for the non-accession countries to assist with implementing industrial pollution control policies.

Water and Wastewater Tariffs and Charges Reforms

One of the Reform Demonstration Projects is being implemented in Karlovac, Croatia and is supporting the successful preparation of investment project of the local water utility in upgrading their water infrastructure, including the WWTP.

This component has under implementation its own communication strategy and the first four "information sheets" were prepared: 1. reform proposals info sheet; 2. background story info sheet; 3. products, tools and activities info sheet; 4. ASTEC model info sheet and translated into national languages.

Public Awareness Raising, Public Participation and Access to Information

Large part of the DRP Phase 2 is devoted to this item including implementation of Small Grants Programme projects, supporting broader involvement of local communities and NGOs in the project through raising awareness and public participation. The SGP projects are focused mainly on agriculture and wetland management and conservation. 19 national and 2 regional small grant projects are being implemented in the Sava River Basin. One regional granted project is on "Strengthening NGO participation in EU WFD implementation in the Sava river basin".

¹ One animal unit is defined as the number of livestock that produce 100 kg of nitrogen in manure ex-storage

Three national campaigns were successfully conducted in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia addressing different water protection issues in wider public using all means of media work.

Within a specific project component on public access to environmental information being implemented in 5 Danube countries, out of which three are in Sava RB (Croatia, B&H and Serbia). Depending on the country, the “products” expected include citizen brochures, manuals to assist government officials in their understanding of their duties with respect to access to information and water-related environmental public participation, capacity building workshops for government officials and NGOs providing practical tools to work on a day-to-day basis in access to information and public participation issues, as well as various draft regulations and/or by laws. Parallel with the country activities, the demonstration projects are also being implemented.

Strengthening/Establishing Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Mechanisms

This project component is designed to assist Danube (including Sava) and Black Sea countries strengthening or establishing inter-ministerial mechanisms as a vehicle to address water pollution and prevention reduction issues requiring actions of more than one government ministry by providing guidance including consultation, information and training as requested by the individual countries.

Sources:

- UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project: Inception Report for ‘Support to the development of the Sava River Basin Management Plan (WFD) – pilot project ‘
- UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project web site www.undp-drp.org