

Working paper

**STRATEGIES FOR PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION IN THE
MANAGEMENT OF
TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS IN
COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION**

Cases of Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe (Estonia/Russia) and
Lake Ohrid (Macedonia/Albania)



The working paper is based on a seminar “Strategies for Public Participation in the Management of Transboundary Waters in Countries in Transition: Cases of Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe (Estonia/Russia) and Lake Ohrid (Macedonia/Albania)” Tartu, 15-16 October 2001.

The seminar was organised by Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (Peipsi CTC) and the Alliance for Lake Cooperation in Ohrid and Prespa (ALLCOOP)

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Map from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/europe_ref01.jpg

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1 . F O R E W O R D

The seminar on “Strategies for Public Participation in the Management of Transboundary Waters in Countries in Transition: Cases of Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe (Estonia/Russia) and Lake Ohrid (Macedonia/Albania)” was organized by two NGOs: Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (Peipsi CTC) and the Alliance for Lake Cooperation in Ohrid and Prespa (ALLCOOP). Peipsi CTC is working in the Estonian-Russian border area, Lake Peipsi basin and ALLCOOP in the Macedonian-Albanian border area, Lake Prespa and Lake Ohrid basins.

The seminar took place on 15-16 October 2001 in Tartu, Estonia and was attended by 60 participants from Estonian, Russian, Latvian, Macedonian, Albanian and Austrian NGOs, ministries, local governments, research institutes, water companies etc.

The workshop was supported by Charity Know How Foundation, Open Society Institute “East-East Program” and Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe.

The Tartu seminar was a follow-up to the first joint workshop which took place in Ohrid, Macedonia on 12-14 March 2001, focusing on introducing UN ECE Guidelines on Public Participation and collecting comments and recommendations from the practitioners and community leaders on these guidelines.

The main objective of the Tartu seminar was: to introduce experiences of public participation in water management in different transboundary areas of Europe (Lake Peipsi, Lake Ohrid, Lake Prespa, the Daugava River, Cherava river basins, other regions) and to give an overview of the international legal framework of public participation in water management, including the UN/ECE Water Convention and the UN/ECE Guideline on Public Participation, the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice and the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD).

The second seminar day was devoted to work in smaller groups on the development of guidelines for involving the public into the elaboration of water management plans in transboundary basins of Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe and Lake Ohrid, based on the EU Water Framework Directive. WFD recognizes that water respects physical and hydrological boundaries, but not political and administrative units. The implementation of the WFD should lead to a more rational water protection and use, to reduced water treatment costs, to increased amenity value of surface waters and to a much more coordinated administration of waters.

The seminar proceedings is prepared by Peipsi CTC, ALLCOOP and WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme project experts and is available in English, Russian, Estonian, Macedonian and Albanian languages (www.ctc.ee). The proceedings draw together the texts of all the presentations made during the seminar; comments and discussions after the presentations; working groups results and annexes containing; seminar programme and list of participants; follow-up plans and the description of Peipsi CTC and ALLCOOP.

2. INTRODUCTION

The main objectives of water management, ultimately, can be narrowed down to providing safe water for drinking, appropriate sanitation, and enough food and energy at reasonable cost in an equitable manner that works in harmony with nature. However, we are not achieving these goals today, and we are on a path leading to crisis and to future problems for a large part of humanity and many parts of the planet's ecosystems¹. In fact this conclusion can be easily extended to the environmental issues in general at global scale. A recent report of the European Environmental Agency² came up with a similar conclusion: "that the general environmental quality in the European Union is not recovering significantly, and in some areas, it is worsening, despite more than 25 years of Community Environmental Policy".

This is why the 1990s for decision makers have been a period for exploring new directions and novel policy approaches and instruments. In this respect, at global, international scale, the most important event was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. It focused the world's attention on the need to promote environmentally sustainable development. The conference was attended by representatives of 178 nations, including a number of European Heads of State and/or Government and the President of the European Commission. Potentially the most significant of the Conference achievements was the 800-page *Agenda 21*. Agenda 21 represents only the beginning rather than the end of a process, and a number of firm targets were omitted during pre-conference negotiations.

Numerous international documents have expressed the importance of public participation and the need to institutionalise it to move towards sustainable development. It is important to mention Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development signed by more than 100 heads of State worldwide, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, establishing that:

"Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided".

¹ World Water Vision,
<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/Vision/cce1f838f03d073dc125688c0063870f.htm>

² Environment in the European Union at the turn of the century. European Environment Agency, 1999

3. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

This publication is based on principles of three international documents which present the framework for transboundary water management and public participation in Europe – UN ECE Water Convention, UN ECE Aarhus Convention and EU Water Framework Directive.

Legal framework document	Geographical coverage	Content	Levels of implementation
UN ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes Entered into force 6 Oct 1996	Countries ratified the convention ³ and riparian parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impacts; ▪ Cooperation in research into and development of techniques for the prevention, control and reduction; ▪ Exchange and protection of environmental information 	- International transboundary river basins
UN ECE Aarhus Convention Entered into force 30 Oct 2001	Countries ratified the convention ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to environmental information ▪ Public participation in environmental decision-making ▪ Access to justice 	- International river basin level - National level - Local level
EU Water Framework Directive Entered into force 22 Dec 2000	EU territory, bordering to EU basins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tools for integrated river basin planning and management; ▪ Setting up River Basin Districts; ▪ Designing Programmes of Measures and developing River Basin Management Plans 	- International river basin level - National level - Local level

³ Ratified, accepted, approved or accessed by Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine (Source: <http://www.unece.org/unece/env/water/topfra1.htm>)

⁴ Ratified, accepted, approved or accessed by Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, Tajikistan, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan (Source: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ctreatv.htm>)

THE DRAFT GUIDELINES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE WATER CONVENTION AND THE AARHUS CONVENTION

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The Legal Framework in the field of Water Management for the Pan-European Region

Traditionally, the only means available for regulating the behaviour of nation states has been through a system of international law, codified in treaties and conventions. Since the beginning of the century more than 170 multilateral environmental treaties and instruments have been established. The vast majority of these agreements are regional in their scope, and many of them apply only to Europe. However, during the 1980s it became increasingly apparent that placing reliance on environmental conventions, agreements and even legislation to secure environmental protection could be only partially effective. A key problem with all international environmental agreements is their implementation and enforcement. Parties to international agreements generally find external monitoring and enforcement systems unacceptable, and wish to control monitoring themselves. Information gathered in this manner may be incomplete or inaccurate due to differing monitoring methods and standards. As a result, treaties incorporating detailed targets and structures have often taken years to draft, and even longer to ratify. The growing sense of urgency in addressing increasingly complex problems has led to a shift in favour of 'softer' conventions which can be drafted and signed within a relatively short time frame. These may include codes of practice, guidelines or frameworks, which allow wide discretion in interpreting their precise requirements. They may be easier to agree, but their very flexibility can reduce their effectiveness.

For the pan-European region, cooperation with respect to transboundary waters was initially based on various underlying principles. However, during the last decade, UN/ECE, UNEP and other organizations have advocated a coordinated regional approach to resolving the water problems. The new paradigm of cooperation at the European level was based upon several principles: prevention of conflicts over water in accordance with the principles of reasonable and equitable use of transboundary waters, the polluter-pays principle, the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach in water management. These principles are built into the basis of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (hereinafter referred to as the UN/ECE Water Convention) which was adopted in Helsinki on 17 March 1992 and entered into force on 6 October 1996.

Bridging the Gap

Following the growing acceptance that environmental regimes must be inclusive, that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process, soon after the adoption of the Rio Declaration, the UN/ECE has quickly moved to the development of the UN/ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access

to Justice in Environmental Matters, adopted in Aarhus in 1998 (hereinafter referred to as the Aarhus Convention).

A number of provisions in the UN/ECE Water Convention anticipated the principles of the Aarhus Convention. For example Article 16 requires that The Riparian Parties shall ensure that information on the conditions of transboundary waters, measures taken or planned to be taken to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, and the effectiveness of those measures, is made available to the public. However, on 17 June 1999, a supplementary protocol to the Convention - the Protocol on Water and Health - was adopted in London on the occasion of the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. Compared to the Water Convention, The Protocol on Water and Health goes further in ensuring public participation in decision-making (article 6, paragraph 2). Under Article 16, paragraph 3 (g), the Parties shall:

...At their meetings consider the need for further provisions on access to information, public participation in decision-making and public access to judicial and administrative review of decisions within the scope of this Protocol, in the light of experience gained on these matters in other international forums.

Another unique feature of the Protocol is the necessary provision for the involvement of NGOs, whereby Article 16, paragraph 3 (f) requires that the Parties shall:

... Establish the modalities for the participation of other competent international governmental and non-governmental bodies in all meetings and other activities pertinent to the achievement of the purposes of this Protocol.

The Aarhus Convention, in addition to the requirement for Access to Environmental Information (Article 4), also requires Parties to make appropriate practical and/or other provisions for the public to participate during the preparation of plans and programmes relating to the environment, within a transparent and fair framework (Article 7). In this respect, the UN/ECE Water Convention alone, through the development of bilateral/multilateral agreements drawn up under article 9, paragraph 1, provides arrangements for public involvement in decision-making. Thereof, the second meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, held at Hague from 23 to 25 March 2000 recognized the need to develop guidelines to ensure that such bilateral or multilateral agreements are effective. Consecutively, the Meeting of The Parties decided to include in the work plan 2000-2003 under the Convention a programme element aimed at finalizing the guidelines for public participation in water management based on the outcome of the UN/ECE-UNEP project on a “*Strategy and framework for compliance and on draft guidelines on public participation in water management*”, with the Netherlands as lead country.

The draft guidelines are intended to assist Governments and joint bodies in the UN/ECE region and in other regions in the world in developing and implementing procedures to enhance public participation in water management. They are particularly intended to assist Governments and joint bodies in the UN/ECE region. The draft guidelines draw on the experience of experts from Governments, joint bodies and NGOs from the pan-European region.



OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION IN ESTONIA AND POSSIBLE BARRIERS FOR COMPLIANCE OF THE AARHUS CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Kaidi Tingas

Danish-Estonian Co-operation Project to Implement the Aarhus Convention in Estonia

The Estonian efforts to implement the Aarhus Convention (AC) were supported by Denmark by conducting the *Project to Assist Estonia in the Implementation of the EU Access to Information Directive and the Aarhus Convention*. The main purpose of the Danish support was to assist Estonian Ministry of the Environment in building the framework of regulations and administrative systems necessary to implement the first two pillars of the AC – access to information (AI) and public participation (PP) in decision-making.

The statements and recommendations presented below were worked out during the project.

Estonia ratified the AC on 6th June 2001 and so the number of parties had passed the magic 16 and the Convention entered into force internationally 90 days later - on 30th October 2001.

General principles of the Convention

Firstly, the Aarhus Convention is not only an environmental policy instrument – it is also an instrument to emphasise certain participatory democratic values. It underlines the values of a strong and stable participatory democracy. This implies:

- An open and transparent public administration;
- A positive attitude in the public administration towards servicing the citizens;
- That politicians and the public administration see it as an advantage to have PP in the decision-making process;
- That the citizens believe and experience that PP in the decision-making process does matter;
- That the citizens have a fundamental trust and confidence in the politicians and the public authorities.

An effective implementation of the Convention not only requires that it should be in accordance with environmental objectives but also that it shows compliance between the democratic spirit it embodies and the prevailing political culture in Estonia. It must be said that achieving full compliance in Estonia is possible but poses challenges to the political and administrative system as well as the public.

Estonian laws

Estonia has incorporated most of the elements of the Aarhus Convention into its national legislation. The 1st pillar – access to information - is covered by the Public Information Act, the Environmental Monitoring Act, the Act on Release of GMO-s, the Draft Act of Environmental Registers and General Part of the Environmental Code (drafting process is going on). The 2nd pillar – public participation in the decision-making process – is covered by the Planning and Building Act, the Environmental Impact Assessment and Auditing Act, the Water Act, the Ambient Air Act, the Waste Act and the Act on Integrated Pollution and Prevention Control.

A solid legal foundation has thereby been established, guaranteeing public access to environmental information and the right to participate in the environmental decision-making. However, many challenges regarding the practical implementation of the newly adopted legal framework and work on public possibility of gaining access to environmental information and participating in the environmental decision making lie ahead.

Practical implementation – historical, societal and economic barriers

The next step is to secure and develop an administration of the legislation. During the project we have trained public officials; in addition, the guideline and the case handbook have been developed in order to support public officials in their daily work within this field.

Nevertheless, the truth is also that Estonians in general are not familiar with the spirit of the Convention. In the light of this, it becomes obvious that we have two complicated tasks ahead. The authorities are faced with the task of not only implementing the Convention, but also of informing the public of their rights to participate and how to do it in the most effective way.

- Direct participation is new to many people because of our past and they need to be acquainted with their rights herewith. Because of our history we have a perception that the authorities cannot be trusted and it is pointless to participate.
- The authorities, therefore, have to be very outspoken on the rights of citizens to instigate people to participate.

The implementation of the AC partly needs a new kind of relationship between the public and public administration/government, more dialogue and interaction.

Example of good practice

By the governmental initiative the Internet portal *Today I Decide* was established in spring 2001. All draft regulations and laws are available there for comments and amendments. Everyone can make suggestions for new regulations, etc., collect the signatures (according to the Digital Signature Act) and send his/her idea or even a draft document to the relevant ministry for further proceedings.

What has been done in the Ministry of the Environment

During the Project several Round Table meetings were organised among representatives of different organisations/authorities/universities to get recommendations for adjustments to the existing Estonian law or practice in order to fully comply with the requirements under the Aarhus Convention.

The following discussion papers have been produced by the project (also available on the project web site www.envir.ee/arhus):

- Internal working documents
- Confidential information
- System of charges for information to the Public
- Attitudes and barriers to PP in environmental decision-making in Estonia
- PP in specific activities, plans, programmes, policies and legally binding instruments
- Collection and dissemination of information

Followed by the recommendations, discussions, existing laws and best possible practice a guideline for public officials was developed. The guideline covers the aspects regarding public access to environmental information and public participation in the decision making process. This includes the environmental impact assessment procedures on public participation, but also the public participation procedures related to the environmental permitting procedure and planning process. The guideline contains a large section on public participation tools and good advice.

A case handbook has also been developed. The case handbook contains a description of the existing PP cases in Estonia and Denmark. By giving a description of how public participation has been conducted in practice it is the aim of the case handbook to show how the public and public officials interact. A learning experience can be drawn from these cases.

Some suggestions for better implementation

The Project made some suggestions to the Ministry of the Environment. Examples:

- Develop best practices at service levels regarding access to information and public participation in the regional departments;
- Work out a procedure (to involve more stakeholders and interest groups) on how to process the act before it reaches the Parliament;
- The authorities shall develop information to the public about the data and information in their possession (meta info). Better overview of what kind of environmental info the individual authority or organisation holds needs to be established;
- The public officials shall be trained more extensively on how they can fulfil the new publication to assist the public in obtaining access to information and public participation;

- The public needs to be trained in using their rights;
- A lot of information is made available on the Internet. This is good, but it is however recommended that other dissemination channels should also be utilised – not forgetting that many people do not have access to the Internet.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

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The Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) reforms the EU water legislation by introducing a new model for water management. It entered into force on 22nd December 2000.

From an environmental point of view, the WFD's ultimate aim is preventing further deterioration and achieving "good status" in all waters. The WFD's managerial approach - integrated water management at the river basin level - aims at ensuring overall coordination of water policy in the EU. Being a "framework", the Directive focuses on establishing the right conditions to encourage efficient and effective water protection at the local level, by providing for a common approach and common objectives, principles, definitions and basic measures. However, the mechanisms and specific measures required to achieve "good status" will take place at the local level and are the responsibility of competent (national, regional, local, or river basin) authorities.

The implementation of the WFD should lead to a more rational water protection and use, to reduced water treatment costs, to increased amenity value of surface waters and to a much more coordinated administration of waters. The ultimate benefit is that the sustainability of water use should be ensured.

Public Participation and the WFD

Article 14 of the Directive demands public participation, but the mechanisms to achieve this are not spelled out or otherwise specified. This is problematic, but it is nonetheless envisaged that public participation is required. Effective participation means engagement and involvement of target groups (e.g. specific stakeholders or the wider public) in implementing

the WFD. It is far more than the provision of information and the gathering of opinions, though these are important preparatory elements.

An open, transparent and participatory approach can bring multiple advantages when it is:

- Included in river basin planning and management from the beginning;
- Adapted to the appropriate scale (i.e. the approach at river basin level will need to be different from that used to engage communities at the local level) and target groups;
- Managed carefully, so that the capacity to meet commitments to stakeholders is not exceeded;
- Adequately resourced.

The strategic implementation process should be based on the principles of openness and transparency encouraging creative participation of interested parties. This is beginning to happen. These parties may be involved both in the work of the strategic co-ordination group (as observers) and in the specific working groups and other activities under the joint implementation strategy (as participants).

Involvement should start at different levels of operation i.e. at general policy levels on the European, river basin, and national scales (for ensuring integration of sectoral interests e.g. nature conservation), at programmatic levels on a local, sub-basin, or national level (for implementing measures such as wetland restoration, agri-environment activities with a positive environmental effect), and for information and public awareness activities. The involvement level should be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on scope and topic of the relevant process or working group. By identifying the kind of involvement needed for each situation of the implementation process, the EC and Member States intend to ensure both the effective participation of and contribution from the interested parties and to enhance their understanding of the different elements related to the process. The basic idea is to promote an open and clear exchange of views and concerns between all the parties directly responsible for the implementation of the framework directive and those who are interested or affected by it.

Why Public Participation?

Recent years have seen a rapid growth of interest in public participation in a wide range of sectors and contexts, including public health, environmental management, urban regeneration, agriculture, conservation, national parks, and local economic development.

In all these sectors new forms of engagement are beginning to emerge, resulting in people increasingly getting involved in their own communities and governments and influencing decisions that affect their lives. The complexities of real-world problems need solutions developed by all stakeholders, if they are to trust in and abide by the outcomes.

Traditional, non-participatory processes such as top-down direction and instruction have been shown to not work. History shows that coercion does not work. The results are clear in the decline in the state of the environment, the increase in social exclusion and the lack of trust of the public in their governments and industry. On the one hand public participation benefits both planning and management institutions and at the same time it benefits the public in general.

Specifically, the following benefits could be summed up:

- Public participation strengthens democracy by showing stakeholders that they do have an influence over what decisions are made;
- NGOs and the public provide locally held information and increased pools of ideas and knowledge. Solutions to problems are found in new and productive partnerships between the local and the external and are therefore better adapted to being implemented locally;
- Public participation creates awareness and ownership of decisions and plans which is in turn essential for their successful implementation;
- NGOs and stakeholder participation allows them to play a more constructive and better informed “watchdog” role and ensure government accountability;
- A continuous investment in the practice of public involvement will help build a culture of co-operation to handle conflicts and tensions. Participation is an investment in the social structures, institutions and relationships that will allow stakeholders to go on to achieve much more in other areas;
- Participation is being increasingly demanded from institutions, donors and the public themselves as their right.

What has become clear in recent years and in a range of sectors is that public participation can lead to improvements in performance and outcomes. There are significant opportunities - if it is properly implemented - to set European water and other environmental management onto a more sustainable path and environmental NGOs clearly have a significant role (and responsibility) to assist in this process.

4. LESSONS LEARNED: PROPOSALS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS INTO THE ELABORATION OF THE RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN

4.1 Identification of Stakeholders and the Public

Given the social, political and legislative⁵ trends at the EU, Member State and regional levels, it is highly unlikely that any river basin management plan (RBMP) can be implemented successfully if it does not meet with broad public acceptance and, in particular, if it is not supported by key stakeholder groups within a river basin, including local residents and sectoral land/water users.⁶

In this publication a distinction is made between 'public' and 'stakeholder' participation, to stress the differing mechanisms and approaches that are likely to be needed for (a) the general population living within an river basin district, and (b) those individuals and organisations with a specific interest in water resources management. "The public" means one or more natural or legal persons, and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organizations or groups (Aarhus Convention). "The stakeholder" means natural or legal person, who has specific interest or active roll in water management.

The most important players in WFD implementation at the strategic level of dialogue will be:

- Those that can really contribute to delivering solutions: water companies, wastewater treatment companies, various vocational associations and unions (farmers, forestry, irrigation, fishery), state bodies of control and supervision, local governments;
- Those that have technical expertise and are 'representative' of a particular constituency: NGOs, National Parks, scientist and scientific institutions;
- And those that pay for action: land-users (e.g. mining and tourism companies, health sector), individual owners of land, potential investor, community and village leaders, schools.⁷

Many solutions to water resource problems will be strategic in nature, requiring a 'whole river basin' rather than local, or sub-basin approach. But the success of the Directive relies on "close cooperation and coherent action at Community, Member State and local level as well as on information, consultation and involvement of the public, including users" (WFD, consideration 14). Each of the levels has its own importance and the participation tools and strategies are differing to a large extent. Following the several mechanisms for public involvement are specified on international river basin, nation state and local level.

⁴ Notably the 1998 'Århus' *Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters*

⁶ Elements for Good Practice in Integrated River Basin Management – a Practical Resource for implementing the EU Water Framework Directive, WWF/EC

⁷ Based on working group results from the seminar on 16 Oct. 2001, contributed by all seminar participants

4.2 Cases of Public Involvement at International River Basin Level

One of the important overall concepts of the WFD is the organization and regulation of water management at the level of river basins. To this effect, river basin districts are created in such a way as to comprise not only the surface run-off through streams and rivers to the sea, but the total area of land and sea together with the associated ground waters and coastal waters.

In the case of international river basins – whether they fall entirely within the EU or extend beyond the boundaries of Community – Member States are asked to ensure co-ordination and co-operation with the aim of producing one single international RBMP. If such an international RBMP cannot be produced for some reason or other, Member States are still responsible for producing RBMP for the parts of the international river basin district falling within their territory.⁸

Our seminar was based on investigation of two transboundary river basins in Europe – Lake Peipsi on the Estonian-Russian border and Lake Ohrid on the Macedonian-Albanian border.

Lake Peipsi Basin

The total length of the Estonian-Russian border is about 277 km where approximately two-thirds of the border goes through Lake Peipsi (in Russian the lake is named Chudskoe) and the Narva River. Lake Peipsi is the fourth largest lake in Europe after Ladoga, Onega, and Vänern with respect to surface area, and is located in the Baltic Sea water basin. Both sides of the Estonian-Russian border zone are mostly agricultural regions of their countries. Arable lands, milk and cattle farms, small-scale fishery, timber enterprises and food processing factories are located in this area; however, rural areas, especially on the Russian side, are rather sparsely populated. Most of the population is urban and living in the two largest towns - Tartu in Estonia with about 100,000 inhabitants and Pskov on the Russian side with 300,000 inhabitants. The border on Lake Peipsi between Estonia and Russia was re-established in 1991, a development which has caused severe social, economic and environmental problems in areas that were formerly closely co-operating. Steps to improve cross border cooperation and to ensure safe and secure borders have been made at different levels of Estonian and Russian governments during the 1990s.

Lake Ohrid Basin

Lake Ohrid is situated in southeastern Europe with Albania and Macedonia as its riparian states, excelling as a unique ecosystem including many endemic species of flora and fauna. The lake has a shoreline of 87,5 km, a maximum depth of 289 m. Approximately 43,000 people live in the Albanian and 126,000 in the Macedonian part of the Lake Ohrid basin. At present, agriculture, especially on the Albanian side is the most important economic sector for the region, but in the future, tourism and industry may reduce the economic significance of agriculture. During the last few years, industry in Macedonia has suffered from

⁸ Elements for Good Practice in Integrated River Basin Management – a Practical Resource for implementing the EU Water Framework Directive, WWF/EC, manuscript

considerable structural and economic problems. The unemployment rate of the region is nearly 30%. Fishery is important for local groups but its importance is expected to decrease with a growth in tourism and industry. High economic pressure and the absence of regulations presently endanger an economic use of resources. The institutionalised bilateral cooperation between Albania and Macedonia dates back to 1956 when an agreement between Yugoslavia and Albania on "Questions of Water Management" was ratified. However, the cooperation and even the communication, among the local authorities, economic sector and the citizens, were very poor until 1991. Important progress was made in 1996 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding aiming at transboundary natural resources management and pollution problems in order to provide a basis for sustainable economic development of the basin.

Assets	Lake Peipsi	Lake Ohrid
Surface Area (km ²)	3558 Estonia: 44% Russia: 56%	358,2 Albania: 30% Macedonia: 70%
Basin Area (km ²)	44,240	1,129
Volume (km ³)	25.2	50.8
Average Depth (m)	7.1	163
Maximum Depth (m)	15.3	289
Maximum Length (km)	143	30.8
Maximum Width (km)	48	14.8
Shore Line (km)	520	87.5
Trophic State	Eutrophic	Oligotrophic
Population in the Basin	1,000,000	Macedonia: 108,000 Albania: 38,000

The river basin analyses and the establishment of river basin plans are the crucial processes for the public to be part of the decision-making at the river basin level. To enable the public to express its views, the authorities responsible for the river basin management plans need to maximize transparency of the issues and intentions addressed by the plans. To explain the pending environmental and water use problems in the river basin as well as the intended measures to combat them via RBMP, a thorough documentation in written form is only a first step. River basin conferences bringing all stakeholders and the public together are another tool to improve communication between the people and officials. Exhibitions about the river basin, existing challenges and intended future solutions appear to be the most efficient strategy to get the public involved. The attraction of water could be linked to the interest in protecting the source.⁹

⁹ Lanz, K., Scheuer, S. 2001. EEB Handbook on EU Water Policy under the Water Framework Directive. EEB.

Box 1.

The Role of the Lake Ohrid Conservation Project in the Capacity Building and Involvement of the NGOs in the Protection and Management Activities of Lake Ohrid Basin¹⁰

Although historically environmental NGOs in Macedonia and Albania have not actively participated in environmental policy-making or management decisions, in recent years NGOs have become increasingly influential in the environmental field. The program for public awareness and participation initiated by Lake Ohrid Conservation Project (LOCP) proposes a range of short- and long-term actions which are addressing some of the major problems and threats affecting Lake Ohrid. The strategy is to strengthen and utilize local environmental NGOs to develop and carry out programs and activities designed to reach the above objectives. The strategy comprises three major sub-components:

- Capacity building of NGOs;
- Public awareness;
- Public action.

Under the Public Awareness sub-component two Green Centres were created in Struga and Ohrid. The Green Centres are serving as a central clearinghouse for the public, providing information about the Lake Ohrid Conservation Project, the lake ecology and environmental problems affecting the lake. They operate as a sort of "watch dog", investigating and reporting environmental violations around the lake to the municipal governments and exchanging information across the border. The Green Centres are offering recreation opportunities for tourists, thereby increasing public interaction with the lake environment while simultaneously creating a mechanism for self-financing.

In the offices of the Green Centres both in Ohrid and in Struga, so far the Green Telephone line has been working successfully. In this period, documentation has been established for more than 400 cases, of local citizens calling to give information about the environmental situation in the region. From this the Green Centres have made more than 100 reports to the Communal inspections about environmental problems, more than 25 reports to the Public Communal enterprises, more than 100 reports about disposed crushed vehicles. Under Public Action sub-component Public meetings are organized as a central tool to ensuring that information about the project is open to all members of the Lake Ohrid community. The public meetings include:

- Roundtables focused on a specific topic, at which scientific and other expert participants present data and results from their work in the project;
- Public Hearings in which journalists, NGOs, project participants and others discuss the project;
- Direct personal contacts between project manager and participants with local government, village community leaders, NGOs, academic institutions, and other public representatives;
- Joint declarations, agreements for cooperative work within and between Macedonia and Albania.

¹⁰ Box 1 is based on the presentation by Dejan Panovski, Lake Ohrid Conservation Project, Macedonia

Box 2.**Proposals for Public Participation in Elaboration of Cherava River Basin Management Plan at International Level**

The most important facts concerning Cherava River Basin Management approach are that the Cherava River is the only transboundary river in the Lake Ohrid Basin; it is the second biggest source of pollution of Lake Ohrid; most of its flow is a part of Albania and a small fragment, important for tourist business, is crossing Macedonia.

The key water management issues in the Cherava River Basin are the necessity of establishing joint bodies for the management of the river basin; regular monitoring of water quality agreed by the two states of Macedonia and Albania; regular reports of the state of water quality; providing public information in three languages (Albanian, English, Macedonian).

The main interests of stakeholders in the key water management issues are economic interests (tourism, mining); water quality (with special concern for water supply systems and quality of drinking water); biodiversity (important for National Parks and forestry); production of electricity; development of the region (in the fields of agriculture, industry and urban development) and potential effects (decrease the costs for using land and water).

The relevant sources of information for stakeholders are scientific and research institutions at state level (Hydro-Biological Institute in Ohrid, Hydro-Meteorological Institute in Tirana etc.), existing national and transboundary bodies (ISTF, MTF, WMC), state and local governments, legislative and inspectorate system.

The methods and formats of communication that can be used in work with different groups of stakeholders are regular correspondence; seminars, workshops and round tables; public hearings; press conferences; public campaigns; study tours; contests.

The possible ways to involve the public within the RBMP development process could be: to offer information about the existing situation in the Cherava River Basin; to develop a summary of the action plan; to conduct a questionnaire among all inhabitants and evaluate the questionnaire; to organise seminars with all stakeholders; to publish the action plan and organise a second round of seminars with the stakeholders.

Box 3.

Latvian Experience - Daugava River Basin project¹¹

On March 2000 the Latvian–Swedish “Daugava River basin project” (Daugava project) has started. The Daugava Project is carried through by: Public Organization “Daugavas fonds” with a project group of 10 specialists (from the Latvian side) and Vattenresurs – Sverige AB (from the Swedish side).

The Daugava project is based on the EU Water Framework Directive. Implementation of the new policy will give a cause for changes both in the legislative and institutional water management systems. Latvia as a pre-accession country to the EU has to be ready for such policy and the Daugava project is one of the first steps towards it.

The long – range objective of the project is to contribute to the development of a modern Latvian water management system by the elaboration of the Daugava River Basin Management Plan according to EU legislation and by gaining the knowledge and experience to be used later in the management of other river basins of Latvia.

So far groups of stakeholders are identified, a basic strategy developed and a database of stakeholders and target groups is established and regularly updated. Stakeholders are divided into three groups according to their role and interest in the elaboration of the Daugava River Basin Management Plan.

1. Environmental and educational NGO's, General public (Mass media), Funds. This group is informed by post, home page, mass media and network of NGO centre with encouragement for further cooperation. Drafted documents were also sent directly to representatives of this group.
2. Inter-ministerial coordination group (including representatives from different ministries as well as NGO centre and Union of Local governments of Latvia), Project board. The inter-ministerial coordination group has an essential role in the distribution of information and promotion of the “Daugava project”. There are two main forms of cooperation with this group: case-by-case consultations and periodical group meetings. The Project Board with representatives both from the Latvian and Swedish side has a key role in decision-making concerning activities within the project.
3. Local governments within the Daugava River Basin, specialists of central governmental institutions, Regional Environmental Boards within the Daugava River Basin, Scientific and research institutions, Professional associations (farmers, industries, water users etc.). One of the most important stakeholders of this group is *local government*. The “Daugava project” has organized interactive seminars with all local governments in the basin. The results of a questionnaire show that local governments are interested in water management within their territory and recognize the link between development and sustainable management of water resources.

¹¹ Box 3 is based on the presentation by Vija Silina, “Daugavas fonds”, Latvia

Specialists from central governmental institutions, Regional Environmental Boards, scientific and research institutions, reference groups, professional associations as well as consultants and experts is a core group for discussing specific issues, for example, the establishment of reference conditions for different types of waters, setting criteria for good water quality, assessment of most effective measures to improve water quality etc. A fruitful collaboration has already started and will be continued further on.

Box 4.

The First Steps on the Cooperative Management of Transboundary Waters on the Eastern European Fringe – the Pilot Study of Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe

Cooperation in the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe basin illustrates the management of an international lake by countries in transition, which need outside technical, material and intellectual support, reorganize its administrative and legal systems, start the promotion of public participation.

Cooperation in the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe basin embraces a wide variety of stakeholders from both countries, which encourage public participation among a wider audience and promotes confidence building between riparian countries. Promotion of public participation in the decision-making process and cooperation between regions and local authorities are the main policy areas in the water management of Lake Peipsi at the moment. The implementation of the European Union Water Framework Directive in the basin will be the challenge of the coming years.

The Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe case demonstrates lessons learned from the first steps of developing integrated water management for the protection and sustainable use of a large transboundary lake shared by countries in transition in the Baltic Sea Basin. The lessons learned could be summed up as:

1. A successful start of cooperative environmental management of transboundary waters after years of economic crisis and political problems is possible, if parties commit themselves politically and create formal mechanisms and means (institutions) for cooperation.
2. Common interests in transboundary water body combined with an adequate legal and political framework and mutual trust result in effective joint environmental management at the intergovernmental level.
3. Members of the joint commission should be elected from very different institutions so that different interests and perspectives are represented in the process of decision-making; therefore a joint commission is a good body for communication, contention and compromises.
4. Activities of the commission must follow a logical rhythm: first the collection of background information and then on the basis of the collected and analysed information decision making for joint actions.

5. It is very important to involve from the very beginning NGOs, local authorities, the public as well as third parties – experts from other countries than those sharing a lake, - into the lake transboundary water management. The governments have to express their will to include into the cooperation structures local stakeholders and NGOs through creating institutional arrangements: in the case of the Estonian – Russian commission a working group under the intergovernmental commission was created for cooperation with local authorities and NGOs.
6. On international water bodies intercalibration of water monitoring sampling and analysis techniques is critical; it requires on the one hand trust and commitment to cooperation between the riparian states, on the other hand, considerable resources – time, human and financial resources to ensure that the same equipment and methods are applied in monitoring.
7. The exchange of data and knowledge is a prerequisite for an effective cooperation and water management in international water basins but it is often difficult to achieve because of a lack of trust between partners.
8. Public participation at local, national and international levels should be promoted. It requires considerable human and financial resources from the decision-makers to promote public participation but involving the public will facilitate a more effective implementation of water management measures.

4.3 Cases of Public Involvement at National Level

The crucial steps for the public to be part of the decision-making at national level are the transposition of administrative provisions into national law as well as the establishment of a national ecological assessment system. Transposition usually requires the consent of national parliaments, so public pressure at that step would have to be at the level of competent government ministries and members of parliament. It may be difficult for NGOs to influence this rather technical process, but given the key importance of the ecological assessment system, every attempt should be made to safeguard the highest possible standards. The WFD requires the Member States to establish the necessary measures to achieve at least a good status in all waters. So nothing keeps a Member State from adopting programmes of measures which are more ambitious than that. Hence, stakeholders should watch closely the legal requirements for programmes of measures put into national law.¹²

Box 5.

The Role of Estonian Water Association and Water Clubs in Elaboration of River Basin Management Plan¹³

In Estonia, persons dealing with water management problems are united under the Estonian Water Association – this is a voluntary organisation, founded on October 26, 1993, aimed at ‘the development of Estonian water management, especially the usage and protection of water bodies and ground water, water supply, sewage, water hygiene and connected natural sciences and legislation, and at dissemination of information regarding water management’. Every year, numerous meetings, reporting and informative events and conferences have been organised; training on water management issues has been developed and publishing activities in the field of water have been promoted.

On August 17, 2001 a new working group was established in the framework of the Water Association – it is called the Water Club and its aim is to promote water management in a wider range of public and inform the public of water problems. During the forthcoming years, the Estonian Water Club sees the inclusion of the public in the discussion of river basin management plans, as a main direction of its activity. As we know, nine river basin districts have been established in Estonia, in the light of the European Union’s Water Framework Directive, all of them exceeding the administrative boundaries of the counties. One head office shall be formed in each district, which, as a rule, shall be located in the public relations office of the environmental authority of the county, which is closest to the river mouth. As a first priority, it has been planned to create three Water Clubs on the basis of the Water Association: in Tallinn, Tartu and Pärnu. Within the framework of the above-mentioned project, the EU water policy and other necessary literature has been translated into the Estonian language, currently available in the Tallinn Water Club, however, they will be accessible also in all other Water Clubs. In the Water Clubs, all interested citizens and groups can obtain information on drafted development plans, and they can also submit their proposals and comments there.

¹² Lanz, K., Scheuer, S. 2001. EEB Handbook on EU Water Policy under the Water Framework Directive. EEB.

¹³ Box 5 is based on a presentation by Maret Merisaar, Estonian Green Movement, Estonia

Box 6.**Educating and Involving Stakeholders by Agency for Development and Promotion of Agriculture of the Republic of Macedonia¹⁴**

Eutrophication is the main transboundary problem at Lake Ohrid. The annual phosphorus load to Lake Ohrid is estimated at 240 t/y, 154 of which are in dissolved form, readily available to the algae. More than 30% of the dissolved phosphorus originates from the rivers and the springs, that is, from the non-point sources of pollution. The non-point sources of pollution have proven to be more difficult to tackle and require different control strategies than those applied for the point sources. Essentially, the problem stems from the fact that diffuse sources do not lend themselves to command and control style oversight. Because a limited amount of funding is available, efforts to reduce phosphorus should focus on the sub-basins most affected by phosphorus.

Numerous agricultural activities today heavily rely on the use of different agrochemicals. In their efforts to produce quality agricultural products, competitive on the open market, the farmers have to use different pesticides to control the multiplicity of diseases, weeds and harmful insects. Recognizing these facts, the Agency is focusing on educating the farmers on the proper use of all those chemical substances (pesticides and fertilizers), that is, to be used in a proper way, on time, no more, no less. Moreover, the Agency is promoting the integrated pest management practices that have multiple benefits, both to the farmers and the environment. However, this needs proper technical knowledge and monitoring equipment that at the moment is not affordable for most of the farmers. Therefore, one of the important activities of the Agency is to monitor different parameters pertinent to the control of the growth of the plants as well of the different pests and distribute to the farmers free-of-charge.

Education programs of the Agency focus on several areas:

1. Adequate use of agrochemicals, handling of surplus pesticides and agrochemicals, controlling wash water from agrochemical application machines; dumping of the packing etc, in order to protect the surface and ground waters;
2. New methods for maximum plant protection and minimum pollution, including:
 - Solar radiation of the soil, by using sunbeams and PVC foil, soil can be protected from diseases, weeds and harmful insects, and in this way it remains clean from chemicals.
 - To pour boiling water through the soil for the same aim which is presented above.
 - Using biological substances.
 - Using bacteria to disintegrate surplus pesticides that have remained in the soil.
 - Analysis of the soil to find out which chemical elements it consists; which fertilizers and their quantity are important for the plant's growth.

¹⁴ Box 6 is based on a presentation by Slagjana Kaladzievska, Agency for the Development and Promotion of Agriculture of the Republic of Macedonia

The basin approach as a whole and the control of the non-point sources of pollution in particular, rely very much on the involvement of and contribution from the stakeholders and the public in general. The ongoing educational and demonstration programs of the Agency coincide with several important actions in the field of agriculture proposed by the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee for Macedonia. The regional river basin associations of citizens can play a crucial role since they are familiar with the non-point pollution sources within the sub-basins. Therefore, it rests heavily on public education and on creating an active public participation and public support.

Box 7.

Public Participation in Water Management in Russia¹⁵

Environmental protection in general and, especially, protection of such an important, irreplaceable and integral component, as water resources, is a problem not only nation-wide, but also social, as far as it touches vital interests of all layers of the population.

Unfortunately, in the present situation in Russia the interaction of the bodies, which to some extent engage in water management and the protection of water bodies, with the public is extremely insignificant. That is caused by the reasons of an objective and subjective character. To the list of objective reasons it is possible to include the following:

1. The problems of the economy and the social sphere are coming to the foreground (unemployment, manufacturing crisis, wages non-payment etc.);
2. The general crisis of management, weakness of administrative structures and state control;
3. The backwardness of civil society institutes;
4. The inefficiency of the system aimed at providing the citizens with environmental information, including data on the state of water bodies.

Among the subjective reasons we can list the following: disbelief of citizens in the importance of public opinion for state structures on environmental questions and unwillingness in this connection to be engaged in environmental public activity; the absence of leaders - organizers of environmental movement capable to attract public attention to environmental problems and to involve the citizens; environmental ignorance and environmental nihilism of the population.

At the same time the existing Russian legislation gives the real rights to the citizens in the sphere of environmental protection and various natural resources (in particular, water bodies). The legal basis of public participation in the protection of water bodies is stated in clauses 30, 42,58 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, clause 3 of the law «About environmental protection» etc. in the Water Code of the Russian Federation, Statute on the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the federal law «About public associations» and the federal law «About environmental expertise».

¹⁵ Box 7 is based on an article by Vladimir Budarin, Head of the Neva-Ladoga Basin Water Administration, Russia

The form of public participation in the management of the use and protection of the water fund is the realization of referendums of various levels, which raise the questions of environmental protection, construction of economic and other objects and realization of other economic activities connected with the influence on the environment and natural objects and conditions of population health of the territory in question. Thus the high degree of legitimacy of administrative decisions is achieved through the economic and other activities, which are based on these decisions and which influence the environment.

4.4 Cases of Public Involvement at Local Level

The most important factor contributing towards our earth's positive development is the sum of all the local initiatives, decisions and actions put together. Local populations and interested parties' influence on the development processes varies a lot, but limited possibilities of taking local decisions can be compensated by voluntary actions, creative ideas and co-operation. It is hardly an exaggeration to claim that most of the environmental threats we are facing today can be solved through local initiatives if we only put our minds to it.¹⁶

Inherent in our recognition that the most serious problems of water security are those at the local level, is the attendant recognition that civil society is among the best suited to address local issues.¹⁷ Each person has a stake in protecting and enhancing the environment and citizens know the needs of their communities through work, play and travel.¹⁸

Box 8.

Pogradec Water Management Project⁹

The Pogradec Water Management Project was launched in the beginning of 1996. Two feasibility studies which aimed at determining the most appropriate means of rehabilitating, upgrading, and extending the water supply and waste water collection and treatment system in the region of Pogradec for the long and for the short-term were prepared. One of the studies covers the drinking water supply system, the other the wastewater collection and treatment system.

The Pogradec Water Management Project is a part of an overall Albania Municipal Water Supply and Wastewater Project. The overall purpose of this project is to improve the provision of water supply and wastewater services to the cities of Elbasan, Fier, Vlore, Lezhe and Pogradec and through that the environmental protection of Lake Ohrid by the introduction of water pollution prevention and control for the Albanian side of the Lake.

¹⁶ Bovin, K., Magnusson, S. 49 Local Initiatives for Sustainable Development. 1997.

¹⁷ Wolf, A. T. 2001. Transboundary Waters: Sharing Benefits, Lessons Learned. Thematic Background Paper for International Conference on Freshwater, Bonn 2001. Manuscript.

¹⁸ Public Participation in Making Local Environmental Decisions. The Aarhus Convention Newcastle Workshop, 2000.

¹⁹ Box 8 is based on a presentation by Naum Gegprifti, Lake Ohrid Watershed Management Committee, Albania

The first implementation phase would include the construction of a wastewater treatment plant near Pogradec, a primary collector connecting the city of Pogradec with the treatment plant and a secondary collecting system in the city of Pogradec. A workshop on the two investigated wastewater concepts was held in Ohrid on February 9 and 10, 1999 with representatives of Albania, Macedonia and different donors participating. The main result of the workshop was a common agreement, based on its considerably lower unit costs, its suitability for project phasing and its lower regulatory requirements.

In addition, the Albanian and Macedonian delegations signed a joint statement to fully involve the Lake Ohrid Management Board and to join efforts in finding additional funding from various donors for future project phases II and III. The Lake Ohrid Monitoring Program should identify the need for evacuating their intent to include such evacuation in the future project phases.

Public Participation has been present during all phases of implementation of the Lake Ohrid Conservation Project. Since the early years of 1995 and 1996 a number of experts and specialists from Albania and Macedonia participated in this process giving their opinions and their scientific data. Later a lot of specialists of different fields related to this Project participated and gave their special contribution and many of them gave interesting data.

Last year some meetings and seminars were organized with specialists, representatives of Local Government and NGOs and they discussed a lot of topics to identify the real situation and determine the priorities in this field.

Box 9.

Proposals for Public Participation in Elaboration of Gdovka River Basin Management Plan in Russia

The key water management problems for the Gdovka River Basin are:

- Lack of management body in the regional local authorities
- Lack of reliable information
- Lack of essential means of subsistence
- Lack of state licences for land-users

The key water management issue of the Gdovka River is the absence of effective biological treatment of sewage (for improvement for BOD and reduction of ammonia by 90%, and pathogenic substances). There were several projects and plans prepared for construction of the Gdov wastewater treatment plant but nevertheless neither of them was realised due to lack of funds in Russia. At the same time, the major international funder of environmental infrastructure projects, the Danish EPA, adopted a decision not to fund wastewater treatment plants for municipalities with the population less than 10 000 (The Gdov municipality population is 6 000 inhabitants). There is a need to develop project proposals to the government as well as to possible international funders, such as the EU TACIS program, for construction of the Gdov municipal wastewater treatment plant and preparation of the Gdovka River sub-basin management plan. The Gdov municipality can prepare such a proposal in cooperation with the Pskov Regional Committee for Natural Resources as well as with Pskov regional NGOs.

The Gdov municipality discussed with the local NGOs and stakeholders the possible involvement of local stakeholders in developing of the Gdovka River Management Plan. It was discussed that environmental information relevant to the river basin management plan can obtain it from the following sources: the Pskov Centre of Hydrometeorology and Environment Monitoring and Sanitary Epidemiological Service. Besides, information for internal use can be found at The Federal State Water Management Institution of “Pskovvodhoz” and from the Administration on the issues of Civil Defence and Extreme Incidents. Based on that information, it would be useful to elaborate an ecological database for the Gdovka River Basin, showing the main points of pollution and its statistics.

The means of communication and format of communication to be used working with different target groups for preparation of the Management Plan are:

- Public hearings and referendums
- Mass media, films
- Newsletters and pamphlets
- NGOs’ means of communication

It is crucial to inform the local population on significant pressures and impacts from human activities in the river basin district and to invite the specialists; to provide such information local newspapers, state newsletters and public meetings should be used. On the other hand it is important to enhance feedback from the public by performing questionnaire studies and collecting suggestions. It is important to provide information demanded by the population.

It is important not only to inform but also involve NGOs, educational institutions, inhabitants, village headmen, and mass media into the process of the RBMP elaboration. The crucial point is to organize a Public Council at the level of local authorities (village headmen) on environmental development, announce in the local newspaper the possibility of organising such a body and ask for interested parties to participate. The Public Council will gather from time to time to discuss the questions of ecological development of the area and provide local population with relevant information.

The elaborated RBMP should be transferred to the area administration and included into the local Agenda 21. Federal structures elaborate such plans and present it to the local authorities and interested parties calling for comments. The “pusher” in that process should be a person with an environmental background, understanding of the fundamental issues or some other initiator raising the problems in this field (representative of the local administration or NGO). Besides, the problems can be stated and solved by the same interested parties.

There is a necessity to create a database, as a basis for information providing a starting point of the process. There could be an option to elaborate an environmental atlas showing the river basin status. It is also important to make an agreement between the local authorities and the bodies that provide information on the issues of data supply and also on the interrelation of the local authorities and information providers. After the adoption of the RBMP its implementation should be supported by the public.

Box 10.**Proposals for Public Participation in Elaboration of Lake Peipsi Management Plan in Tartu and Jõgeva County in Estonia**

The following could be mentioned as key problems of water management in the Lake Peipsi water basin in Jõgeva and Tartu counties: water quality, availability and the level of information; monitoring and accessibility of monitoring data; sustainable use of water resources (especially that of the ground water); preservation of habitats and rare species; the economy (agriculture, forestry, fishery, water transport, etc.); formation of water price (raw water treatment, water supply and sewage systems, wastage) and the evaluation of investment necessities.

In order to inform different interested groups, various formats should be used. The following forms are the most efficient for the dissemination of information among local inhabitants: articles in a local newspaper, various forms of data, reaching homes by way of children, such as leaflets, stickers, information booklets, etc.; materials presented on the notice boards of local governments, know-how disseminated by professional associations; more definitely directed information of various forms distributed by way of non-governmental organisations. The best information channels for enterprises, the second large target group, are the following: technical and marketing information, disseminated via the Internet; market and advertising news spread through media channels; more circumscribed special data delivered at seminars and training events. The great importance of disseminating more definite professional information among the second target group was underlined, the aspects connected with responsibility and profit being in the foreground. Professional associations can also substantially contribute to the better inclusion of this group.

As we are dealing with the inhabitants of border areas, it is an especially relevant necessity to disseminate information both in the Estonian and Russian languages.

In the compilation of the water management plan's chapters, which are more important for interested groups, it is needful to pay attention to the following aspects:

1. The inclusion of the public is extremely essential in the compilation of the general description regarding the Water Basin, as it is namely the regular population who is aware of even the subtlest nuances, which may not be generally known but might have a relevant impact on the subsequent management. The role of local authorities as a connecting link between various interest groups is of special significance. Unfortunately, the division of the territory of Estonia into water basins was carried out in a relatively narrow circle of geographers and hydrologists and the public can have a voice only in the determination of sub-basins and sectional catchment areas.

2. With regard to economic analysis, the relevant issues are the formation of water price and whether the population would accept or not the totally cost-based price calculations. Careful economic analysis is also very important in such restricted areas aimed at environmental protection, where, as a result of the limitations, the profit of the land user may decrease (e.g. nitrate-sensitive regions, protected habitats in forests or river meadows, etc.). Business analysis is also necessary in protected areas, wetlands and in regions suitable for the development of eco-tourism. The so-called soft values should also be assessed: natural and cultural heritage; natural objects' function of education, promotion of health, and recovering strengths for work and life; and discussions should be carried out, regarding the possibilities of how to take into account these values, as, in the majority of cases, they cannot be expressed in financial terms.
3. The compilation of the plan of measures is prevalingly the task of the teams comprising professional specialists and experts, however, during the preparatory phase, especially when evaluating human impacts, the participation of the public is also essential. Likewise, it is important to determine all significant painful issues, to possibly precisely determine environmental objectives, and to ascertain the main interested groups. Careful economic analysis has a decisive impact on the entire plan of measures.

Box 11.

Sociological Study on the Interests of Rural Municipalities in the Lake Peipsi Area in Estonia²⁰

In the spring-summer of 2001 four Peipsi CTC project managers visited all 19 municipalities²¹, which have a shoreline with Lake Peipsi. The aim of the survey rose from the need to map the real problems, needs, ideas and perspectives of the Lake Peipsi area and get a more precise overview of the region. In the municipalities focus group interviews were conducted with local authority leaders, representatives from NGOs, entrepreneurs, teachers and development specialists.

The municipalities in the Lake Peipsi area are rather small – altogether about 27,000 inhabitants are living in the region, the average municipality has 1,000 inhabitants. These 19 municipalities are located in 4 counties (Ida-Viru, Jõgeva, Tartu and Põlva county) forming a peripheral area and, with small exceptions, are economically less important and unsuccessful communities.

The question how much depends on individuals and how large is the contribution of people in the progression or entrepreneurship of a rural municipality becomes especially obvious in such small places. We can say that in more than half of the rural municipalities in the Lake Peipsi area, there are active and eager people in important positions, constantly labouring in the name of improvements. It goes without saying that these rural municipalities thrive a lot better and they look towards the future more optimistically.

²⁰ Box 11 is based on a presentation by Peeter Unt, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation, Estonia

²¹ Alajõe, Iisaku, Lohusuu, Tudulinna, Kasepää, Pala, Torma, Alatskivi, Meeksi, Peipsiääre, Piirissaare, Vara, Võnnu, Mikitamäe, Räpina, Värskä parishes and Mustvee, Kallaste, and Räpina town.

The lake provides a number of local people with work, but times are not as good for fishermen as only ten years ago. Very many Latvian fishermen come to Lake Peipsi - mainly just for a holiday. The majority of rural municipalities also underline, besides economic importance, the emotional charge offered by the lake. Clean and picturesque natural environment is also seen as a potential tourism magnet. At the same time, smaller water bodies (Lake Kunikvere, artificial lake in Alatskivi, River Võhandu), Emajõe Suursoo Mire and forests have also been mentioned, in addition to Lake Peipsi.

Municipal governments cooperate quite closely with local NGOs. At the same time the activities of the NGOs are mostly confined to interest clubs and sports societies and the organisation of minor events. In very few municipalities the NGOs also deal with social work and care. Cooperation with Russia is generally very scarce. The main impediment seems to be cross-border communication, but also change of people in power in the local governments. Communication with Russia mainly takes place in the field of tourism. In general, communication with Russia and other foreign countries is rather passive.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Participants of the CEE NGOs meeting, held in Budapest on 9-10 March 2001, organised by the WWF and Global Water Partnership, emphasized that public involvement in water management is needed now, immediately, as soon as possible (“yesterday”), in order to facilitate the process. Public involvement is appropriate and required at all geographical scales and at all decision-making levels.

The seminar held on 15-16 October 2001 in Tartu confirmed a wide-ranging interest in water issues by all sectors of society and a need for further development of public participation discussions in the field of water management. Especially in international basins interests of different groups should be considered. Often these interests are very different or even contrary. In this publication a distinction was made between ‘public’ and ‘stakeholder’ participation, to stress the differing mechanisms and approaches that are likely to be needed for these target groups. By definition **‘the public’** means one or more natural or legal persons, and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organizations or groups (the Aarhus Convention). **‘The stakeholder’** means natural or legal person, who has a specific interest or active roll in water management. Stakeholders have mostly the same level of knowledge on the issue and expertise on different aspects. Consultation and discussion with this group may be more theoretical and detailed. To reach all of the stakeholder groups the first task for water management planners will be to define the stakeholders.

It was drawn out by the seminar participants in the working groups that the most important stakeholders in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and the UN ECE Water and Aarhus conventions at the strategic level of dialogue will be:

- **Those that can contribute to delivering solutions in practice:** water companies, wastewater treatment companies, various vocational associations and unions (farmers, forestry, irrigation, fishery), state bodies of control and supervision, local governments;
- **Those that have technical expertise and/or are ‘representative’ of a particular constituency:** NGOs, National Parks, scientist and scientific institutions;
- **And those that pay for action:** land-users (e.g. mining and tourism companies, health sector), individual owners of land, potential investor, community and village leaders, schools.

It was expressed also throughout the seminar that public and stakeholder participation is required at different levels of management – **at international river basin, national and local level** - especially in the cases of transboundary waters.

At international basin level active stakeholder groups that include major businesses and agricultural associations, larger interest groups and NGOs - are actively involved in decision-making. As a rule stakeholders participating at international level are experienced and cooperating with each other and lobbying effectively in decision-making. At the international basin level, stakeholders often play an important role of promoting trust building between the riparian states that share waters and enhancing information exchange and communication, which are important components in the transboundary water management; stakeholder involvement at international level helps to attain a more effective

implementation of international environmental agreements. Good examples of this kind of initiatives were presented in the case of the Lake Ohrid Basin where the Lake Ohrid Conservation Project plays a role of an information mediator between the two states and stakeholders (see Box 1).

The Lake Peipsi cooperation experience (Box 4) showed that it was very important to involve from the very beginning NGOs, local authorities as well as third parties – experts from other countries than those sharing a lake, - into transboundary water management. Estonian and Russian governments included into the cooperation structures local stakeholders and NGOs through creating institutional arrangements a working group under the Estonian – Russian commission for cooperation with local authorities and NGOs. Institutionalisation of involvement of the local stakeholders promoted effective implementation of the Estonian – Russian transboundary water agreement and brought into the cooperation additional know-how and financial resources from the local level and international funds.

Despite all efforts, in all larger international basins, at the international level involvement of the wider public will most likely remain limited to a few large (international) NGOs and well-organized interest groups. However, public participation at the basin level can be a valuable supplement to participation at the national level, but it can never replace it.²²

Public participation **at national level** is important to promote the effective development and implementation of national legislation. National stakeholder groups, including businesses, farmer associations, local authorities and NGOs communicate needs to the governments for preparation of possible new legislative acts; involvement of these stakeholders in the implementation of the national legislation is critical for the effective implementation of the national legislation. The crucial steps for the public to be part of the decision-making at national level are the transposition of administrative provisions into national law as well as the establishment of a national ecological assessment system.

In Estonia, the establishment of the Water Clubs (Box 5) aimed to promote public and stakeholder involvement in water management and to inform the public of water problems is a successful example: local water clubs increasingly include a growing number of on the one hand water specialists, local and regional NGOs, local authorities, schools, etc.; and on the other hand, the water club movement enjoys political support and attention from the government. Moreover, the water clubs through an Estonian representative at the Ministry of the Environment is connected to the global network on water management – the Global Water Partnership. Thus, the water clubs help to promote two-way communication and coordination of efforts between the community local level and the national level and are plugged into the international network of water specialists and stakeholders.

The Agency for the Development and Promotion of Agriculture of the Republic of Macedonia involved stakeholders into control of non-point source pollution (Box 6). As a result of these actions, in the Republic the basin approach on the whole and the control of the non-point sources of pollution in particular, rely very much on the involvement of and contribution from the stakeholders and the public in general. The ongoing educational and

²² Mostert, E. *The Management of International River Basins. How can the public participate?* Participatory processes in water management. Proceedings of the Satellite Conference to the World Conference on Science (Budapest, Hungary 28-30 June 1999). Ed. Jozsef Gayer. UNESCO. Paris, 2000

demonstration programs of the Agency coincide with several important actions in the field of agriculture proposed by the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee for Macedonia. The regional river basin associations of citizens play an increasingly crucial role since they are familiar with non-point pollution sources within the sub-basins. Therefore, it rests heavily on public education and on creating an active public participation and public support.

Public participation **at local level** is important and most effective as local environmental problems such as water pollution are to be managed locally; people meet these problems in their everyday life and are therefore most active to take action, which guarantees most effective public participation. In the cases of Lake Peipsi and Lake Ohrid at local level the regions include the most diverse set of groups, which have their own specific cultural and economic background. It is the biggest challenge to water management to work with these diverse groups.

One of the most important stakeholder groups at local level is **local government**. They have the role of a mediator between the decision-makers and interested stakeholders; they have the responsibility to conduct public participation and to find the ways for the public to affect the decision-making. It requires regular informing and encouraging of active participation by all the local governments in the river basin. Local governments are responsible in water management within their territory and recognize the link between development and sustainable management of water resources. Active participation at that level is still missing and this should be the stakeholder group under special concern. It is recognized internationally, based on studies of involvement of local authorities in developing and transition countries, that at local authorities' level often insufficient planning and implementation capacity of local governments takes place due to inadequate resources, limited awareness and protracted central level planning.²³

A good illustration of the importance of capacity building and more active involvement of local authorities in the water management provided the case of construction of the Pogradec Water Management Project in the municipality of Pogradec, Albania (Box 8). The municipal authorities played a critical role in the preparation of the feasibility study and construction of the water supply and wastewater treatment plant that allowed constructing the plant with considerably lower unit costs than initially estimated for this type of a water plant and coordinate this water protection measure with other activities under the Lake Ohrid Basin Management Plan.

Box 9 that describes proposals for public participation in the elaboration of the Gdovka River Basin Management Plan in Russia also demonstrates the importance of an active role of the local authorities and developing cooperation among the local authorities with regional environmental authorities and NGOs for finding resources to prepare and construct a wastewater treatment plant for the Gdovka River where the municipality of Gdov is situated and for developing the River Gdovka sub-basin management plan.

Many participants of the seminar stressed the importance of capacity building of stakeholder groups at the local level so that the stakeholders would be able to implement local environmental protection measures.

²³ Coltier G. W. 1999. Sustaining both Biodiversity and Fisheries in Ancient Lakes. Ancient lakes: their Cultural and Biological Diversity. Pp. 177-187.

What has been learnt from the presentations, discussions and group work sessions can be summed up as follows:

- There is a very large range of stakeholders with a large extent of interest differing from each other ready to participate in the water management issues;
- Each of those stakeholder groups at every water management level needs a special approach to reach their needs and interests - different channels and tools of communication, different information packages, different level of detailed description; but all of them need clarity and transparency in the information;
- The package of programs and activities to enhance public participation should be as diverse as possible and reach the audience wherever possible;
- One of the most important pre-condition for stakeholder involvement is to formulate very clearly the problems and questions in which stakeholders can contribute the most;
- The involvement of the wider public into water management issues is rather challenging and it is not an easy task even for the environmental experts to find ways for the public to take part in complicate water management discussions and decision-making;
- The strategy for stakeholder and general public participation in water management should be developed and contributed by the decision-makers themselves with the help of administrators, politicians, NGOs and scientists.

The more developed is the society the more it is concerned about the state of the environment and the more important is environmental protection. In a more developed society the need and will for information is raising as well. The most important element for contributing to water management at all levels is trust building in stakeholders through information exchange and regular communication. This seminar was a good example of this kind of cooperation between different cultures and contexts.

ANNEX I

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

International seminar

Strategies for Public Participation in the Management of Transboundary Waters in Countries in Transition: Cases of Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe (Estonia/Russia) and Lake Ohrid (Macedonia/Albania)

Dates: 15-16 October 2001

Place: Toomemäe Conference Center, Tartu
Lossi 19. Tel: 07 300 473

Organizers: Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (Estonia/Russia)
ALLCOOP - Alliance for Lake Cooperation of Ohrid and Prespa
(Macedonia/Albania)

Languages: Estonian, Russian, English
(Simultaneous translation)

Supported by: Open Society Institute "East-East Program"
Charity Know How Foundation
REC Estonia

15 October, Monday

9.00 - 9.15 *Registration*

9.15 - 9.30 Introduction into the seminar

Plenary Session I: International Legal Framework for Public Participation in Management of Transboundary Waters in Europe

Moderator: Gulnara Roll, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation

9.30 – 9.45 The draft Guidelines on Public Participation in Water Management: Bridging the Gap Between the Water Convention and the Aarhus Convention - *Oliver Avramovski, ALLCOOP, Macedonia*

9.45 – 10.00 Overview of the Estonian implementation and possible barriers for compliance of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters – *Kaidi Tingas, Estonian Ministry of Environment*

10.00 – 10.15 Public Participation in Implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive - *Charlie Avis, WWF International and Piret Uus, Peipsi CTC*

Plenary Session II: National Policies for Involving Public in Water Management in Transboundary Water Basins of Lakes Ohrid and Peipsi/Chudskoe

Lake Peipsi – Estonia/Russia

- 10.15 – 10.30 National Policies in Estonia – *Jalmar Mandel, Head of Tartu County Environmental Service*
- 10.30 – 10.50 National Policies in Russia - *Vladimir Budarin, Head of Neva -Ladoga Basin Water Administration*
- 10.50 – 11.10 Questions and discussion on the policies in the Lake Peipsi Basin
- 11.10 – 11.40 *Coffee break*

Lake Ohrid – Macedonia/Albania

- 11.40 – 12.00 Ministry of Environment and Physical planning: Information center -wide connection with stakeholders - *Svetlana Gjorgeva, Macedonian Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning*
- 12.00 – 12.20 The control of the non-point sources of pollution in Lake Ohrid watershed: The role of the Agency for Development and Promotion of the Agriculture of Republic of Macedonia - *Slagjana Kaladzieska, Agency for Development and Promotion of the Agriculture of Republic of Macedonia*
- 12.20 – 12.40 Developments in Lake Ohrid Watershed, the role of Public involvement and participation (Albanian side) - *Gusho Arjan, Dept. of Cooperation and Coordination of Development in Pogradec*
- 12.40 – 13.00 Questions and discussion on the policies in the Lake Ohrid Basin
- 13.00 – 14.20 *Lunch*

Plenary Session III: Local Experiences in Public Participation in the Transboundary Water Basins in Countries in Transition – Lakes Ohrid and Peipsi/Chudskoe

- Moderator: Maret Merisaar, Estonian Green Movement*
- 14.30 -- 14.50 The role of LOCP in the capacity building and involvement of the NGOs in the protection and management activities of lake Ohrid Watershed - *Dejan Panovski, Project Implementation Unit Director*
- 14.50 – 15.10 Wastewater collection and treatment as a top priority for the Albanian side of the Lake Ohrid basin – *Naum Gegprifty, President of the Lake Ohrid Watershed Management Committee for Albania*
- 15.10 – 15.30 Involvement of public in the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin in Russia - *Olga Jouravkova, NGO “Lake Chudskoe Project”*
- 15.30 – 15.45 Work of Pskov Oblast NGO Support Center – *Lev Schlosberg, Director of the NGO “Vozrozhdenie”*
- 15.45 – 16.00 Questions and discussion
- 16.00 – 16.30 *Coffee break*

Plenary Session IV: Local Experiences in Public Participation in the Transboundary Water Basins in Countries in Transition

- 16.30 – 16.45 Estonian water clubs: An example of involving public into water management - *Maret Merisaar, Estonian Green Movement*
- 16.45 – 17.00 Latvian Experience: River Daugava Basin - *Vija Silina, Daugava project*
- 17.00 – 17.15 Sociological study on the needs and interests of rural municipalities in the Lake Peipsi area - *Peeter Unt, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation*
- 17.30 – 17.45 Questions and discussion
Conclusion of the first seminar day. Technical announcements.
- 19.00 *Conference dinner*

16 October, Tuesday

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- 9.00 – 9.15 Background presentation about Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan in Europe - *Eda Andresmaa, Estonian Ministry of Environment*

First Group work session

BACKGROUND FOR GROUP LEADERS

“Elements for Good Practice in Integrated River Basin Management – a Practical Resource for implementing the EU Water Framework Directive” and EEB Handbook on WU Water Policies are the methodological basis for the group work sessions.²⁴

Group 1. Task: To identify public stakeholders, key water management issues and sources of information for participating in the process of development of RBMP in Cherava River Basin.

Chairperson: Jovanco Sekuloski, ALLCOOP; note-keeper: Slagjana Kalajdzieska

Group 2. Task: To identify public stakeholders, key water management issues and sources of information for participating in the process of development of RBMP in Lake Peipsi basin in Pskov oblast.

Chairperson: Alexander Balakhonov; note-keeper: Olga Jouravkova

Group 3 Task: To identify public stakeholders, key water management issues and sources of information for participating in the process of development of RBMP in Lake Peipsi basin in Tartu and Jõgeva County.

Chairperson: Tuuli Rasso, REC Estonia

²⁴ Elements for Good Practice in Integrated River basin Management – a Practical Resource for implementing the EU Water Framework Directive. Key issues, lessons learned and “good practice” examples from the WWF/EC `Water Seminar Series` 2000/2001

ORGANIZATION OF WORK IN THE GROUPS

Group will identify public stakeholders, key water management issues and sources of information in the region. Using Nominal Group Work Technique the following questions will be answered:

1. Who are **the stakeholders**?
2. Which are **the key water management issues** for the RBD?
3. What are **the interests of stakeholders** in key water management issues?
4. What are **the existing sources of relevant information** at different scales (e.g. RBD, sub-basin, town, village, farm) for different groups of stakeholders?
5. What kind of **means of communication** and **format of communication** should be used working with different groups of stakeholders?

10.40 – 11.00 *Coffee break*

Second Group work session

The task of the second group work session is to develop an action plan for involving public into elaboration of River Basin Management Plan using the principles of WFD. What are the key issues where stakeholders can be most effective in improving the RBMP? How the stakeholders can contribute into the RBMP using the tools supported by Aarhus Convention?

Group 1 Task: To develop an action plan for involving public into elaboration of RBMP in Cherava River basin

Chairperson: Jovanco Sekuloski, ALLCOOP; note-keeper: Slagjana Kalajdzieska

Group 2 Task: To develop an action plan for involving public into elaboration of RBMP in Lake Peipsi basin in Pskov oblast.

Chairperson: Alexander Balakhonov; note-keeper: Olga Jouravkova

Group 3. Task: To develop an action plan for involving public into elaboration of RBMP in Lake Peipsi basin in Jõgeva county.

Chairperson: Ülo Sults; note-keeper: Piret Uus

The action plan should cover public involvement into development of all elements of RBMP step-by-step:

1. Group leader will introduce Mandatory elements for River Basin Management Plans
2. Group will choose 3 elements among those and develop recommendations for involving public into elaboration of River Basin Management Plan

Mandatory elements for River Basin Management Plans:

1. A general description of RBD characteristics (such as the location and boundaries)
2. A summary of significant pressures and impacts from human activities in RBD.
3. Identification and mapping of protected areas (such as:
 - Areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption;
 - Areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species;
 - Bodies of water designated as recreational waters, including areas designated as bathing waters;
 - Nutrient-sensitive areas, including areas designated as vulnerable zones;
 - Areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection.)
4. A map of the monitoring networks (monitoring maps of surface water status and groundwater status)
5. A list of the environmental objectives established for surface waters, groundwaters and protected areas (environmental objectives such as:
 - Member States shall implement the necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all bodies of surface water;
 - Member States shall protect, enhance and restore all bodies of groundwater.)
6. A summary of the economic analysis of water use. (The economic analysis shall contain information to make calculations of recovery of the costs of water services and make judgments about the most cost-effective combination of measures in respect of water uses)
7. A summary of the Programme of Measures. (The measures must cover issues such as water services; controls on point source discharges; identification of authorised direct discharges to groundwater; measures taken for priority substances; measures taken to prevent or reduce accidental pollution.)
8. A register of any more detailed programmes and management plans within the RBD, e.g. those for an individual sub-basin or a specific sector.

13.00 – 14.00 *Lunch*

14.10 – 14.50 Presentations by the working groups.

Moderator: Gulnara Roll, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation

14.50 – 15.45 Concluding plenary session

Discussion on all three public participation action plans.

Comments by:

Dejan Panovski, Director of the Macedonian Project Implementation Unit in Ohrid of the Lake Ohrid Conservation Project, Macedonia

Gusho Arjan, Head of Department of Cooperation and Coordination of Development in Municipality of Pogradec

Alexander Balakhonov, Deputy Head of Committee of Natural Resources of Pskov Region

Jalmar Mandel, Director of Tartu county Environmental Protection Service

General discussion

15.45

End of the workshop

ANNEX II

WORKSHOP CONTRIBUTORS

Macedonia	
Oliver Avramovski Svetlana Gjorgeva	ALLCOOP - Alliance for Lake Cooperation of Ohrid and Prespa Head of Information Centre of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
Slagjana Kalajdzievska	Head of the Regional Office of the Agency for Development and Promotion of the Agriculture of Republic of Macedonia;
Dejan Panovski	Director of the Macedonian Project Implementation Unit in Ohrid of the Lake Ohrid Conservation Project, Macedonia;
Jovanø Sekuloski	ALLCOOP Macedonia
Albania	
Gusho Arjan	Head of Department of Cooperation and Coordination of Development in Municipality of Pogradec
Buzo Fillareta Gegprifti Naum	President of Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee in Albania.
Russia	
Alexander Balakhonov	Deputy Head of Committee of Natural Resources of Pskov Region
Marina Kazmina	Head of The Federal State Water Management Institution of "Pskovvodhoz"
Anna Petrova	Gdov District administration, Leading specialist
Tatiana Savina	Gdov District administration, Deputy head
Lev Scholsberg	Director of NGO "Vozrozhdenie", Pskov
Olga Jouravkova	Environmental Expert of NGO "Chudskoje Project", Pskov
Vassilenko Olga	Managing Director of NGO "Chudskoje Project", Pskov
Austria	
Rolan Pechlaner	Innsbruck University of Limnology
Latvia	
Vija Silina	Daugava River Basin Project
Estonia	
Kaidi Tiinas	Estonian Ministry of Environment
Eda Andresmaa	Estonian Ministry of Environment
Maret Merisaar	Estonian Green Movement
Jalmar Mandel	Director of Tartu county Environmental Protection Service
Ivo Ojamäe	Tartu county Environmental Protection Agency
Tiina Peil	SEI Tallinn
Elve Arukask	Tartu Town Government
Tuuli Rasso	REC Estonia
Tiiu Sizova	Ida-Viru county Environmental Protection Agency
Mart Joosep	Jõgeva county Environmental Protection Agency
Jaanus Kala	Põlva county Environmental Protection Agency
Indrek Tamberg	Võru county Environmental Protection Agency
Aivar Lainjärv	Lääne-Viru county Environmental Protection Agency
Kristi Olt	Narva town environmental specialist
Gea Järvela	Nõo municipality, environmental expert
Uno Parm	Head of Rõngu Municipality
Jaanika Kaljuvee	Võrtsjärve Lake Foundation
Jüri Morozov	Head of Saare Municipality

Märt Jallakas	Head of Põlva Municipality
Pavel Kostromin	Mustvee town mayor
Margus Kütt	Mustvee town government, environmental specialist
Toivo Ilves	Head of Jõgeva Municipality
Georgi Korjunov	Kallaste town mayor
Väino Kivioja	Deputy head of Rõpina Municipality
Gulnara Roll	Peipsi CTC Chairperson
Margit Säre	Peipsi CTC, managing director
Ülo Sults	Peipsi CTC environmental expert
Piret Uus	Peipsi CTC, public participation expert
Peeter Unt	Peipsi CTC, project manager

ANNEX III

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following projects and organisations are acknowledged for the financial contribution:

- ❖ Project “Integrated Strategies for the Management of Transboundary Waters on the European fringe - the pilot study of Lake Peipsi and its drainage basin (MANTRA-East)” supported by the European Commission under the Fifth Framework Program (contract No. EVK1-CT-2000-00076)
- ❖ Charity Know How Foundation
- ❖ Open Society Institute “East-East Program”
- ❖ Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

ANNEX IV

FOLLOW-UP PLANS

Cherava River Project

With status of only transboundary river in Lake Ohrid Basin, Cherava River is prearranged to become symbol of promising successful cooperation in management of joint natural resources between two neighbour countries – Albania and Macedonia.

The project is carefully established in the time-consuming process, through intensive meetings, e-mail communication, telephone discussions and presentations, with clear aspiration from *ALLCOOP* to ensure full support for the project's aims and activities, not only from the domestic and foreign NGOs and experts willingly to participate in project, but also from high officials in local governments and ministries, and most important, from ordinary citizens who live within Cherava River Basin. The general scheduling on the concept and activities was agreed at the international workshops "*Strategies For Public Participation In The Management Of Transboundary Waters In Countries In Transition: Lake Ohrid And Lake Peipsi Case Studies*", held from 12-14 March in Ohrid, Macedonia and 15-16 October 2001 in Tartu, Estonia with participation of all involved project partners.

For easier understanding of this project short description of some essentials for Lake Ohrid will follow. Lake Ohrid, due to its very high age of approximately two to three million years, excels as a unique ecosystem sheltering many endemic and relict species of flora and fauna. This is why Lake Ohrid was declared a *UNESCO* natural heritage site in 1979. In addition, the oligotrophic character of the lake and the total volume of 48.5 km³ render Lake Ohrid as one of the most important freshwater resources in South-East Europe. However, at present, the different human activities around endanger the lake, with eutrophication as the main transboundary problem.

Within the Lake Ohrid Basin, the Cherava River sub-basin distinguishes with several particularities: Cherava is the only transboundary river in the Lake Ohrid Basin; among the 43 river in the Lake Ohrid Basin, Cherava is second the most important source of pollution for phosphorus which considerable part comes from the non-point sources. The erosion from extensive deforestation and the agricultural activities is the main cause for an intensive run-off of nutrients to the river; the long-term research, as well as the recent monitoring data confirm that Cherava River is a serious source of bacterial contamination of the lake. There is no sewerage and wastewater treatment. Most of the households do not have septic tanks at all or they are not operated properly; about one third of the basin is declared as nature and landscape protected area or belongs to the Galicica National Park; using the water for irrigation has greatly altered the natural hydrological cycle. There are thirteen reservoirs within the Cherava River sub-basin; the intensive mining activities in the past and the resumed interest for mineral exploitation at the present pose serious environmental threats to Cherava River and Lake Ohrid; Macedonian part of the river at Lake Ohrid is very important nature conservation and tourist area; communities within Cherava river sub-basin have poor communication and road infrastructure and slow pace of development. With activities planned in the project joint river basin authority will be established, consisted of representatives of the NGOs, different stakeholder groups, municipal authorities and local experts officials - *Cherava River Basin Council (CRBC)*; *CRBC* will search for agreement on the priority issues; *CRBC* will publish detailed inventory of the basin's resources and their

present and historical use with general evaluation of the basin as part of the *Draft Cherava River Sub-basin Action Plan*. CRBC will adopt *Cherava River Sub-basin Action Plan*; CRBC hopefully will increase interest of citizens and NGOs on pollution control measures and protection of Cherava River and Lake Ohrid and their participation in the activities organized by CRBC.

The preparation of the management plan for the transboundary Cherava River will directly involve a number of activists and experts from NGOs from Albania, Macedonia, Estonia, Russia and other countries and will essentially strengthen their communication and cooperation. Many other local NGOs and informal groups of citizens and stakeholders will be actively involved in every phase of the project. These groups include municipal authorities, farmers and economic enterprises in a wide range of commercial and industrial sector. Local and regional associations of citizens can play a crucial role in control of pollution sources within the sub-basins, especially non-point sources. Public awareness on environmental issues concerned Cherava River and Lake Ohrid will increase through activities of the project. Ultimately, the project will support and enhance cooperative basin planning efforts to protect and improve water quality of Lake Ohrid and will serve as model that can be applied for the lake at whole.

Until recently the citizens of Albania and Macedonia were used to rely on the decisions of the highly centralized governments. The local watershed planning process, proposed in the project, puts the emphasis on the role of the individual citizens, community groups and user associations in tackling the pollution. The long-standing ambition of ALLCOOP is to promote and strengthen the civil society in the region through the project activities.

Mantra-East project

MANTRA East - "*Integrated Strategies for the Management of Transboundary Waters on the Eastern European fringe - the pilot study of Lake Peipsi and its drainage basin*" is a three-year international environmental research project started in February 2001, launched to analyse and develop strategic planning methodologies and scientific tools for the integrated management of transboundary water basins located on the existing and future borders of the European Union. The project is carried through by a group of researchers and water management specialists from Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Russia. The project is funded by European Union Fifth Framework Program.

There are generally defined the following three scientific objectives to the project:

- To evaluate the applicability of the EU WFD to the new future border regions, with regard to (i) assessment the state of eutrophication (e.g. ecological status) in lakes and river basins, and (ii) development of strategic lake and river basin tools for source apportionment, retention, and time-trends in nutrient loads
- To develop methods to improve communication and utilization of scientific information in a transboundary context
- To develop institutional mechanisms and policy instruments for decision making under conditions of transition and uncertainty.

The second module of the MANTRA East project will focus on aspects related to the development, use and role of environmental information for policy- and decision-making in

a transboundary management context. A guidelines with recommendations for increasing Public Participation will be prepared aiming on:

- To identify the specific problems and barriers associated with public participation in environmental issues, and to construct strategies to encourage and develop public participation.
- To identify how to develop participation in areas with little experience of democratic institutions.
- To formulate ways of improving environmental information.

The Guidelines will consist recommendations of the EU Water Framework Directive, UNECE Guidelines on Public Participation, UNECE Water Convention and Aarhus Convention and will contain regional specifics.

Additional information about the project, successes and results could be observed on the Internet page www.mantraeast.org.

ANNEX V

ALLCOOP - ALLIANCE FOR LAKE COOPERATION IN OHRID AND PRESIPA

ALLCOOP is created by group of individuals involved in various activities of *Lake Ohrid Conservation Project*, precisely to be what other NGOs in the region are not.

As an alternative of other NGOs in the region predominantly ill from localism *ALLCOOP* is prearranged to be international – with registrations in two states, offices in Macedonia (Ohrid) and Albania (Dolna Gorica) and ambition to establish third office in Greece. *ALLCOOP* considers Lake Ohrid watershed as an organic formation, which should be carry on as a whole, and perceives existing fragmentation of one watershed between three states as possibility for extensive cooperation, which should connect people right through political borders, as necessity to have joint management of the trans-boundary water resources.

ALLCOOP creates the first NGO network, within Lake Ohrid watershed, consists of 7 NGOs from Albania and Macedonia, nevertheless open for other aspirants. *ALLCOOP* establishes partner relationships with local governments, vital for implementation of large-scale projects inside watershed. Experts from organization were invited by Mayor of city of Resen to help in development of complete long-term environmental policy for Prespa region, sponsored by German KFW Bank. *ALLCOOP* helps Mayor and Council of Municipality of Kosel in development and implementation of LEAP. *ALLCOOP* has good relations with *Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning* especially with *Information Agency* established in the frame of this institution. *ALLCOOP* makes an effort to involve experts and scientist from regional scientific institutes and organizations in preparation and implementation of its projects, but also makes an effort to involve international experts to utilize experience and expertise from abroad in sustainable development of the region.

ALLCOOP, first in the region establishes affluent web-site, not only for promotion of its goals and projects, but also to promote various institutions – from *Lake Ohrid Conservation Project*, *Hydro-biological Institute* to National Parks and partner NGOs from Albania and Macedonia, never before presented on Internet.

ALLCOOP has team policy different from the majority of NGOs inside the region. Without ambition to be grassroots organization *ALLCOOP* carefully puts up small competent team of passionate professionals and determined volunteers with ambition to increase the organization status on domestic and international level and to create and implement projects important for regional growth, rising of civil society and development of closeness among the people from three states hard-pressed by prejudices, historical conflicts and misunderstandings.

ALLCOOP has official partnership with NGOs from several countries and very special relationship with NGO *Peipsi CTC* from Tartu, Estonia, partner in two international projects and hopefully, important ally for the future. *ALLCOOP* watchfully shapes its long-term strategy with full awareness for the crucial starting points which remains core for the future activities – trans boundary cooperation, sustainable development, consciousness for environment, partnership with diverse domestic and international institutions and organizations and growing of democracy within Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa region.

PEIPSI CENTER FOR TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION – PEIPSI CTC

Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (Peipsi CTC) is an international NGO, aiming at sustainable development and cross border cooperation in the Estonian-Russian border area, lake Peipsi Basin.

Peipsi CTC started its work in 1993. There are Peipsi CTC offices in Tartu, Estonia and Pskov, Russia. Local coordinators work in the communities around Lake Peipsi.

The main fields of Peipsi CTC activities are:

❖ Environmental protection and water management in Lake Peipsi basin

In accord with the working plan of the Estonian-Russian Transboundary Water Commission, Peipsi CTC works to implement the transboundary water agreement in the Lake Peipsi Basin through involving public and local stakeholders into implementation of the international environmental agreement.

The aim of our environmental program is to promote integrated water management in the Lake Peipsi basin and involvement of local stakeholders, including local authorities, NGOs, businesses, in management and protection of the transboundary waters.

To achieve these objectives, Peipsi CTC implements projects in following fields:

- Environmental management;
- Environmental research, with a special focus on environmental policy and management;
- Environmental information and outreach.

❖ Socio-economic development of the border area

The aim of the program is to promote social and economic development in Lake Peipsi region, through:

- Improved cooperation of local, regional and state governments and NGOs;
- Increased cross-border communication and trust between local authorities and NGO-s;
- Promotion of public participation in the decision making on the issues of local development;
- Organizing trainings and re-training programs for adults in different community groups: local governments, NGO -s, women groups, entrepreneurs;
- Promotion of economic development of the region with special focus on eco-tourism.

❖ Civil society and NGO development

The aim of the program is to raise awareness of the importance of civil society through legislative initiatives, further education and training of citizens, research and information dissemination activities and promoting activities of non-governmental organisations operating for the public interest on the local level.