

Minutes from the 9th regular meeting of the Joint Working Group
held on 29-01-2008,
from 10.00am – 12:00am
in the conference room of Vode Vojvodine, Novi Sad

Present: Arpad Varga (Srbijavode), Nenad Stefanovic (Vode Vojvodine), Milica Nadezdic (Hydromet), Matthias Löw, Claus Heuberger, Christian Ebel, Ivana Ivkovic, Jovana Nastasijevic

1. Opening of the meeting, updating

Claus thanked the colleagues from Vode Vojvodine for the hospitality of today's meeting. He also introduced STE Matthias Löw, expressing the satisfaction that he could also be present as an expert for flood issues, which also seem to be the burning issue in Vojvodina. Further on, Claus gave the overview over the activities carried out and the results obtained in the period since the last JWG meeting (6th November 2007).

Component 01: shorter and more general overview. There have not been too many activities carried out since November, because of the holidays. However, Udo Sittig has managed to evaluate the questionnaire about the public awareness that was carried out by the twinning team last summer. He made a thorough elaboration including the development of the software for "filtering" of the results based on different parameters (education, age etc. of the questioned persons). Claus also handed out the print-out version of this result display, so that the colleagues get the impression how the evaluation works.

Further on, there have been some activities done on preparation for implementation of the new EU directives (among all Urban Waste Water Directive and others) within the component 01. The activity concerning the organisational structure and financial planning is also almost at the end.

Component 02: In Christian took over the floor with an overview over the elaborated Strategy for the redesign of the monitoring system for SW in Serbia, which has been finished in cooperation of the German and Serbian colleagues. The similar document for the groundwater is in the process of creation (first draft) by the German GW experts. Christian has reminded the present colleagues that one of the main tasks of this Twinning is the elaboration of the RBMP for the Kolubara catchment area. Both of the strategy documents (for SW and GW) should serve as a proposal for the upgrading of the existing monitoring system in order to implement the WFD in the future. The analysis of the organisational aspect of this task is also the topic to this project, as well as the financial and planning of the staff necessary to carry out all the duties.

So far the impression is good concerning the Serbian understanding of the necessity to adopt these documents from the part of the Serbian Government, to make them official and allow their implementation also from the legal point of view. This is the impression of the last SCM.

Serbian colleagues will formulate the first draft of the new monitoring program for the SW in Kolubara catchment area by the 15th of February and for the GW by the 7th of March 2008. These papers will be compiled with the characterization report that is already existing, need however some fine tuning, and the last point is the elaboration of the program of measures.

Next point concerning the component 02 is the purchasing of the technical equipment for the automated water monitoring stations. The document is 95% finalised It has been formulated so that the Serbian colleagues can simply fill in whatever their requirements might be in terms of the equipment. That is so-called "modular approach", referring to the system which allows upgrading anytime.

The training camp for the staff to operate these stations will be installed at the monitoring station in Beli Brod, which will be equipped with the donated devices from Germany, outside of the Twinning Project.

The experts have also elaborated the Field handbook for the sampling procedures, transport and handling of the GW and SW samples for different parameters. This document should be a proposal, a multi-purpose guideline how to manage the samples. The German colleagues have accompanied the Serbian partners in sampling and based on this experience, they have developed this handbook. Christian thanked Milica Nadezdic and her team for assistance and effort in this activity.

2. Matthias Löw

The expert introduced himself and said a few words about his role in the Hessian Ministry for Environment, as well as in the scope of the Twinning project. His main task is the flood issue – risks, problems of all sorts in this sense. He is also the chairman of the LAWA working group - special board for floods. The implementation of the Flood Directive of the EU is also the current issue in Germany/Hessen. He said he will be happy to share the experiences with the Serbian colleagues and to see how they have dealt with the problems concerning flood.

Arpad Varga has given a short description of the present state in Serbia concerning flood/defence from flood. He has been working for 15 years as a deputy director for flood defence for the whole Serbia. Basic data on the procedure are to be found in the Water Master Plan of Serbia, and all the included maps of the endangered floodplains. The flood defence is carried out based on the annual Action Plan which is being newly formulated each year. For those objects constructed by the state, the certain levels of defence have been clearly defined, as well as the persons in charge for each of the levels. In case of the passive defence from flood, i.e. dikes, there is a regime prescribed, regarding the work of the reservoirs which are to receive the amounts of flood water. Those areas not covered by the Action Plan, are subject to the local self management bodies. They usually deal only with the consequences of the floods, since they don't have the systems for prevention.

The maximum discharge for the protection from flood in Serbia amounts 17 000m³/sec plus few litres per sec. in hilly areas (torrent flood) – which is also not rare in Serbia.

As for the potential damage estimation, the analyses have been done partially – e.g. for the area of Macva, in the scope of a project financed by the World Bank – topic: revitalisation of the drainage system – and also the cost benefit analysis. But there is no general analysis on this issue.

Vojvodina is a flat land which lies on the bottom of the previous Panonian Sea, so there are a lot of inland waters to be managed and drained, as well as water from precipitation. Therefore, Vojvodina has one of the largest cannel networks in the world and pump stations, and there is a special operation plan also for that system.

Matthias has added that in Germany there are also some lacks concerning the mapping of the economic aspects for one territory. The first step is the identification of the areas at risk. Therefore the colleagues need also the information on these areas in particular.

Nenad has pointed out that in Vojvodina it is particularly hard to map the areas because it is a flat land. Most of the rivers in Vojvodina have dikes on both sides. It is very hard to do the simulation of the terrain when performing the mapping if you have the 2d flood wave and the watercourse which is displayed in 1d. Of course this wouldn't be the problem if the digital elevation model would have been available for all areas. This is the topic of the presentation to be held by Vode Vojvodine today. This topic has also been excluded from the EU WFD.

Matthias: (answer on Varga's question concerning the maximum discharge for flood defence in Hessen): about 8 000m³/sec on the Rhine River.

Claus has got back to the agenda of the meeting.

3. Human resource development activity

According to the contract, the HR core team should be established and trained. Since the administrative situation in Serbia is such that not only WD staff should be enough to complete this activity, therefore it has been agreed to involve also other institutions in the forming of the HR core team. With the consent of all directors of corresponding institutions, this should be feasible.

Arpad Varga has used the opportunity to say good bye to this project and his duties in general, since he is very close to the retirement and this would be his final meeting within the Twinning.

4. Miscellaneous

Addendum – concerning the prolongation of the project, the things are not so clear at the moment. The European Commission in Brussels has still not obtained our addendum for verification/declination. It is still by the EAR since 20th December, so we are still waiting. We should soon be able to know our final time schedule but we are certain we will not have the clear answer until the end of March.

Next meeting: the proposed date is 26th February. Naturally, this date is also subject to changes, if some unpredictabilities should occur.