

The workshop of the representatives from municipalities of Gauja river basin district on involvement in the river basin management, held in the frame of the Project on „European Network of municipalities and rivers”

28 April, 2006,

Guest house "Melturi", Drabešu parish, Cēsu district

Report

The goals of the workshop:

- To provide an overview on the results from the events held by ENMaR project in 2005/2005 as well as to discuss the main findings on assessment on pressure and impact in Gauja River Basin district.
- To introduce with a situation in other river basins which are representing partner regions of the project (Sweden, Germany, England and Spain);
- Jointly to discuss the development of the Guide on Options for Municipalities to participate in the river basin management.

Proceedings:

Daina Indriksone, Baltic Eenvironmental Forum, opened the event, introduced to the participants with its goals as well as with agenda.

Further, the project experts held the presentations which introduced with the results of ENMaR events, as well as presenting main findings with regard to pressures and impacts evaluated in the Gauja river Basin district based on available information and discussions with workshop participants..

The various overviews were presented: on tourism and water management by Anda Ruskule, on spatial planning and its role in supporting water quality (Kristina Veidemane); on agriculture and forestry and its impacts on water recourses (Jolanta Bāra); on water supply and waste water services and their importance in rive basin management (Ingrīda Brēmere). The presentation slides were handed out to the participants at the venue.

The participants were introduced with the situation in the other ENMaR project regions. At first, ENMaR project partners from the Emån river, Sweden (Thomas Nydén and Peter Johansson) told about their cooperation model between municipalities which aims at improved water quality in a shared river basin.

Further on, Ingrīda Brēmere briefly reviewed on the actual issues on water protection in Germany, Spain and England.

Anda Ruskule introduced to the participants with the Guide which is developed in the frame of the ENMaR project. One of the aims of the Guide is to demonstrate good practice examples for measures which can be implemented by municipalities and other stakeholders in the field of water management. Thus, the implementation of the Water Framework directive would be supported. The measures shall be based on the experience of the project regions in undertaking concrete actions which improves water quality. Further on, the Guide shall link the water management issues with the regional development. The draft structure of the guide was outline, too.

When discussing on the Guide structure, the participants stressed that it is very important to show practical examples and not to give general overviews and guidance notes. To start this work, the chairperson of the events invited participants to express their proposals on the potential best practice examples from the Gauja river basin district which could be include in the Guide.

To collect as many proposals as possible, each participant was asked to write on his/her suggestions on positive experience in Latvia, as well as what would be valuable to learn from other regions. The compiled results of the suggestions please see in the Annex 1 of the report.

As the next, the participants discussed, that the guide could give some methodologies and explanations with concrete examples on the following issues:

- Pressure and impact assessment: description on methods on how to assess the pressures from point and diffuse sources on the municipal level. To give an overview of different forest types, their structure, and the potential for run-off depending of forest structure. It is important that the assessments are regularly reviewed since the pressures on waters are permanent (forest clear cuts, drainage, road construction, etc).
- Latvāņi – pollution by alien species which has impact on landscape and biological diversity along the river banks;
- Organic farming in the river protection zones and surroundings – the explanation on benefits fro environment and farmers.
- Storm water discharges from cities and settlements.

Tools for implementation of measures were identified as needed

- Mechanisms on how to enforce the individual house to be connected to sewage system – local rules;
- New alternative, innovative solutions for which the control mechanisms is not needed.
- The local municipalities shall have environmental expert which would have a task to deal also with water management.
- To establish voluntary inions of municipalities which would attract interested and faithful professionals (planning specialists, environmental experts – special union for water management issues.

The participants initiated that ENMaR internet home page shall encourage active discussions on river basin management issues as well give a for a for posing questions and receiving answers on actual issues.

It was also proposed to develop information on water management depending on the specifics of the target group – own info for schoolchildren, own for adults, and own for policy makers.

It is also important to discuss how the cooperation would continue after the end of the project.

Suggestions for the Guide

The potential good practice examples from Latvia:

- The preventions of the river straightening and overgrowth. However, the majority of the streams in the Gauja river basin district has a potential to become eutrofied. Therefore, it is important to show what shall be undertaken to prevent the process.
- Currently, a project in North Gauja is implemented. In the frame of it, several measures to increase biodiversity will be implemented. The results could be included in the Guide.
- Cēsis Nature Heritage Park – the maintenance and the solutions for sewage treatments is solved by active involvement of the local inhabitants – land and property owners are signing up agreements with local government.
- Ķemeri – the restoration of the river by constructing meanders. Although Ķemeri is not a part of Gauja river basin district, the good example for other regions could be included in the guide as well.
- Bogs – as a ecosystem for which a hydrological regime is very essential. A project in Lubana wetlands are implemented at the moment.
- Project on rain/storm waters collection and discharge system is implemented in the town Cesis. This example could be very valuable for small and medium size towns. Therefore the practical and economically efficient solutions are very needed for Latvian municipalities.
- Tourism infrastructure system and the impact assessment study performed in the Gauja river basin district would be valuable information also for management of other river basins too.
- Mežoles project in the forestry sector (results of the WWF project) – shows how sustainable forestry management can be organised.
- Cēsis- local rules for the management of the water reservoirs.
- The monitoring of the agriculture run-off – performed in Zoseni.
- Valka-Valga – cooperation in border towns on the water management issues.
- The connection of rural settlements to the bigger waste water treatment plants in the neighbouring towns – one of the effective mechanisms how to organise water services.

Potential examples from other regions – interest of Latvia :

- Small HES- good examples. Up till now, there is a negative attitude towards small HES in Latvia, since there are indications on impacts on water ecosystem, water amounts.
- Rain water treatment in small towns – the potential use of reed beds, sedimentation dams, as for example in Sweden.
- Example of the Swedish cooperation model for the successful management of the water resources common for several administrative territories.