

GEF UNEP/MAP Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedPartnership) (Component 1)

1st Harmonization Meeting on the Integrated Management of the Buna / Bojana Basin, Coastal Area and Aquifers

MEETING REPORT

Meeting Objectives

Discuss and elaborate on the:

- Baseline situation with regard to the main common issues identified in the river basin and the coastal area;
- Stakeholders' expectations with regard to the management of the Buna/Bojana area including the coastal, river basin and aquifer resources (contribute to formulation of a "vision").

Date and venue:

11 July 2011

Hotel Podgorica, Podgorica (Montenegro)

Major topics discussed and meeting results:

The 1st Harmonization Meeting on the Integrated Management of the Buna/Bojana basin, coastal area and aquifers took place in Podgorica, Montenegro, on 11 July 2011. The meeting was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro. Stakeholders and decision-makers from the Albanian and Montenegrin coastal area participated in this first joint consultation to identify the issues and priorities to be considered in the Buna/Bojana coastal area plan. The meeting was convened by the three partners of the Component 1 of the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large

Marine Ecosystem (MedPartnership), namely, PAP/RAC, GWP-Med and UNESCO-IHP, as well as by the MedPartnership Focal Points for Albania and Montenegro. The meeting was chaired by Ms Jelena Knezevic, Adviser to the Minister of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro.

The welcoming remarks were made by the representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration of Montenegro, PAP/RAC, GWP-Med and UNESCO-IHP. The videos of their interventions can be found at (<http://vimeo.com/user8620253>). Ms Marina Markovic (PAP/RAC) presented the framework for the preparation of the Buna/Bojana Plan and the process to be followed for its preparation, aims, objectives, time-frame and future steps.

The national team leaders from Albania (Mr Zamir Dedej) and Montenegro (Ms Marina Markovic) presented their findings included in the Scoping Report which constitutes a preliminary assessment of the range and nature of the issues being faced in the Buna/Bojana area both in the short and long term. Following the presentation of the Scoping Report, the participants broke out in two working groups (one composed of Albanian stakeholders and one composed of Montenegrin stakeholders) in order to review and discuss the issues (pressures, state and impacts) identified by the national team leaders. The main findings of the two working groups are presented below.

Main findings and conclusions of the Albanian working group:

- A complex system from hydrological point of view is in place and should be taken into account;
- Not enough data and disperse data are available, but there is also a lack of institutional co-ordination;
- Erosion on the coast (loss of biodiversity and land on the coast);
- Flood bringing also water quality problems and human activities (agriculture and fishery);
- Water quality;
- Unsustainable waste and wastewater management;
- Unsustainable fishery activity on the coast and along the river;
- Salinisation of the aquifers/sea water intrusion;
- Urbanisation of the land and lack of urban planning for different area;
- Protected areas are not managed properly;
- Biodiversity loss and deterioration (loss of sand dunes/hunting).

Findings of the Montenegrin working group:

Approaches/practices that have a detrimental impact on the environmental values in the area:

- Water pollution, from the upstream sources and locally; for the latter, locations of particular concern include Ada Bojana, Long beach and Port Milena;
- Upstream use of water resources for electricity generation, including plans for expansion of hydro-power schemes in both countries;
- Overexploitation of water resources/overextraction of groundwater;
- Lack of wastewater treatment in the coastal area;

- Illegal fishing (use of dynamite and non-permitted fishing gear);
- Lack of adequate management approaches to address complex issues (Bojana/Buna watershed area is larger than Montenegro);
- Poor management of upstream accumulations (usually driven by the electricity generation objectives, neglecting other water uses and needs downstream);
- Sound baseline data for integrated planning is not always available – e.g. geodetic systems of the two countries differ, which makes the pairing of data difficult and limits the usefulness of such data for plans (including spatial ones); hydro-met and water quality data is of better availability, verified through the Adricosm project;
- Significant pressures on biodiversity, with some fish species (local names: keciga, hama) becoming extinct;
- Construction on the coast and especially illegal construction (e.g. 400 illegally built objects along Bojana/Buna river bank), exacerbating water pollution problems;
- Solid waste management practices are inadequate (examples of illegal waste dumps in the background of Long beach and Stoj area).

Concerns for the different economic sectors:

- Deteriorating quality of local water sources (e.g. Lisna Bori) is a concern for water supply;
- Agricultural production is affected by both deteriorating water quality and quantity;
- Salinisation is an issue that affects agriculture, water supply and tourism;
- Loss of fertile soil (e.g. in Fraskanjel area) also has a negative impact on agricultural potential of the area;
- Use of water for recreation, essential for tourism development, is and can be further affected by incidence of poor water quality at certain locations;
- Coastal erosions/loss of space is a concern for tourism development and infrastructure;
- Fishing is affected by loss of species and negative trends in abundance of fisheries;
- Flooding causes significant damages (causes of the record 2010 flooding are complex and include *inter alia* high water levels of Drini river acting as an impediment for Skadar lake discharge into the sea through Bojana/Buna); hydrological data is partial (good records on water levels but not on the flows).

Management approaches that need to be changed:

- Transboundary co-operation in addressing the issues in the area was lacking so far;
- Management of water resources (surface and groundwater) was not done in an integrated manner;
- Legislation on the two sides of the river needs to be harmonized (e.g. on nature protection);
- Co-operation with civil sector needs to be strengthened and expanded;
- Lack of ecosystem approach in so far plans for flood management;

- Scientific work and monitoring need to be facilitated through elimination/easing of administrative procedures (e.g. permits for crossing the border);
- It is important to ensure that competent and knowledgeable people are in a position to either make the decisions or to inform the decision makers;
- Bojana/Buna hydrological data from the two countries needs to be connected and the key parameters (such as medium flow) determined; natural and anthropogenic pressures for the river course need to be identified;
- Harmonisation of the geodetic data is needed;
- Management of upstream accumulations needs to be improved;
- For (especially) protected areas, better control and enforcement of legislation is needed.

Follow-up and future steps

The last part of the meeting in plenary session was devoted to confront and discuss the views, perceptions and priorities from both groups of stakeholders and decision makers in order to start defining a common vision for the future of the Buna/Bojana Plan. One of the main elements of the future vision around which the entire discussion was organised is the development of eco tourism.

The results from this and future consultations will be then again analysed by the national team leaders and project partners in order to prepare the document including the vision that will be submitted to the Steering Committee of the Buna/Bojana Plan for its consideration.

The meeting was concluded with final remarks on the IM process that will lead to final delivery of the Integrated Management Plan for Buna/Bojana. Also, government representatives of Albania and Montenegro are once more encouraged to nominate members of the Plan Steering Committee that will supervise the process of preparation and adoption of the Plan. It is expected that the draft Plan will be prepared by mid 2012 with a number of stakeholder consultation meetings taking place in the meantime. The final Plan will be delivered by the end of 2012.

Annexes

- List of participants is attached as Annex I.
- Agenda of the meeting is attached as Annex II.
- Presentations from the meeting are attached as Annex III.

ANNEX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX II: AGENDA OF THE MEETING

Chair: Ms Jelena Knezevic, Adviser to the Minister of Sustainable Development and Tourism (MNE)

<p>10.00-10.30</p>	<p>Opening – Welcome</p> <p><i>Ms Ivana Vojinović, Assistant Minister for Environmental Protection, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, MNE</i></p> <p><i>Mr Redi Baduni, Director, Directorate of Environmental Protection, Representative of Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, ALB</i></p> <p><i>Mr Marko Prem, Deputy Director, PAP/RAC</i></p> <p><i>Mr Dimitris Faloutsos, Programme Co-ordinator GWP-Med</i></p> <p><i>Mr Jose Luis Martin-Bordes, Project Co-ordinator, UNESCO-IHP</i></p>
<p>10.30 – 10.45</p>	<p>Setting the framework for the Consultation: The preparation of the Buna/Bojana Plan</p> <p>The aim of the presentation is to explain the framework for the preparation of the Buna/Bojana Plan. It will also explain the process to be followed of its preparation, its aims, objectives, timeframe as well as the future steps. A short discussion follows.</p> <p><i>Ms Marina Markovic, PAP/RAC</i></p>
<p>10.40 – 11.20</p>	<p>Providing the basis for the initiation of the Planning: The Buna/Bojana Scoping Report</p> <p>The report constitutes a preliminary assessment of the range and nature of the issues being faced in the area both in the short and long term. The presentation provides input to the discussions that follow.</p> <p><i>Ms Marina Markovic, MNE TL</i></p> <p><i>Mr Zamir Dedej, ALB TL</i></p>
<p>11.20 – 11.30</p>	<p>The Consultation</p> <p>Aims and Objectives - The structure of the discussion that follows</p> <p>- <i>Mr Dimitris Faloutsos, GWP-Med</i></p>
<p><i>11.30 -12.00</i></p>	<p><i>Coffee Break</i></p>
<p><i>12.00 : 13.00</i></p>	<p>The Consultation: Issues (Pressures, State, Impacts)</p> <p><i>Discussion in groups</i></p>
<p><i>13.00:14.00</i></p>	<p>The Consultation: Issues (Pressures, State, Impacts)</p>

	<p><i>Discussion in plenary</i></p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Dimitris Faloutsos, GWP-Med</i></p> <p>Rapporteur: <i>Mr Jose Luis Martin-Bordes, UNESCO-IHP</i></p>
14.00 – 15.00	Lunch Break
15.00 : 16.00	<p>The Consultation: Vision</p> <p><i>Discussion in plenary</i></p> <p>Moderator: <i>Dimitris Faloutsos, GWP-Med</i></p> <p>Rapporteur: <i>Mr Jose Luis Martin-Bordes, Project Co-ordinator, UNESCO-IHP</i></p>
16.00 – 16.15	Coffee Break
16.15 : 17.00	The Consultation: Follow up
17.00 – 17.30	Wrap up and conclusions

ANNEX III: PRESENTATIONS FROM THE MEETING

Marina Marković, PAP/RAC: IMP: The Integrated Management Process

Marina Marković, MNE TL: Scoping Report Montenegro

Zamir Dedej, ALB TL: Scoping Report Albania