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# **Bulgaria : Success of the institutional twinning for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and Economic Instruments**

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(The News N° 21 - January 2011)

The 2-year twinning agreement between the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water and the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing (MEDDTL) ended in October 2010.

This project financed by the European Commission was implemented by IOWater, with a particularly important support from the Artois-Picardy and Rhone-Mediterranean- Corsica French Water Agencies.

On the French side, this twinning mobilized a full-time resident adviser in Sofia, Mr. Arnaud Courtecuisse, and many specialists from the MEDDTL, the 6 French Water Agencies, IOWater and BRGM ... a total of about 40 experts, 80 experts' assignments in Bulgaria and 2 study tours in France.

On the Bulgarian side, this twinning mobilized officials from the Ministry of Environment and Water and the 4 Basin Directorates : Eastern Aegean (Plovdiv), Western Aegean (Blaegovgrad), Danube (Pleven) and Black Sea (Varna). The project had two main objectives :

- **Providing support to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in Bulgaria ;**
- **Strengthening water policy in Bulgaria through better use of economic instruments.**

It was implemented through a large program of institutional assistance and capacity building at different levels :

- **at national level**, the Bulgarian Ministry and Basin Directorates gathered a Working Group to monitor the project activities and coordinate the drafting of Management Plans in the 4 basins. This Group benefited from training on different aspects of the WFD (presentation of methodologies, practical case studies, and tool for monitoring PoMs.) ;
- **in each basin**, the Basin Committees were associated to the development of the Management Plan and Program of Measures. Then, since the Urban Waste Water Directive emerged as the main measure, the actions targeted municipal officials responsible for investments in sanitation, with specific workshops and the development of an operational guide for project preparation.

The support to WFD implementation in Bulgaria took place in 3 phases :

- Until December 2009, the European calendar deadline for the publication of Management Plans, support to the development of Programs of Measures for basins, with : analysis of the work of the Basin Directorates ; presentation of the methods used in France (to assess the effectiveness of measures, identify and justify the exemptions, address the lack of data ...) ; consultation with interested parties and the public ... ;
- A 2nd phase from January to March 2010, with support to the implementation of reporting directly to the WISE website of the European Commission, which has resulted in a "green card" from the Commission confirming compliance with the WFD timetable by Bulgaria ;
- The 3rd phase included support to the effective implementation of planned measures. This last component is particularly important because achieving Good Status by 2015 will depend on the speed with which the concerned contracting authorities (mostly municipalities for networks and wastewater treatment plants) will make the necessary investments in the field.

The strengthening of water policy through the use of economic instruments focused on two components :

- **Improving the tax system :**

It aimed to provide support to review the method of calculating the taxes levied by the Basin Directorates and donated to a National Environmental Fund ; a gradual increase in the tax amount from the water sector should provide financial support to the WFD Programs of Measures.

Actions on this topic, led by the RM&C Agency, focused on the definition of taxes (pollution parameters, rate ...), on improving the information system and on the process for levying taxes.

- **The economic analysis in plans and programs :**

The work carried out under the twinning helped introduce the methods used in France and test them in the field ; it led to :

- A simple tool for calculating the potential increase in water prices, following the implementation of the Programs of Measures,
- A guide on cost recovery in water utilities, dealing with pricing policies and their social acceptability,
- A guide on the economic analysis when preparing Management Plans, its objective is to propose ways of improving the analysis for the next cycle from 2015 onwards,
- A Bulgarian version of "Ecowhat", a training module organized around a role play designed to understand the use of economic analysis in Management Plans.

## An institutional twinning in Bulgaria : Programs of Measures and economic instruments of the WFD

(The News N° 17 - February 2010)

**The twinning agreement signed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Water and the Environment and the French Ministry of Ecology (MEEDDM) started in March 2009.**

Seconded for 18 months by the Artois- Picardy French Water Agency, Arnaud Courtecuisse took his position of resident adviser of the twinning in Sofia, at the Bulgarian Water Directorate.

This project is led by IOWater, mandated by the "MEEDDM" for following up the twinning arrangements in the field of water.

### **A launching phase to adapt the work plan to the local context**

The beginning of the project was marked by exchanges to take into account the work started by the Bulgarian Basin Directorates on the development of Programs of Measures ; indeed to be in conformity with the WFD timetable, a first version of these documents had been presented for public consultation at the end of 2008. A kick-off seminar for the project was held on 7 April 2009 ; it was opened by Mrs. Lubka Katchakova, Bulgarian Vice-Minister in charge of water, Mr. Etienne de Poncins, French Ambassador, and Mr. Jean-Paul Rivaud representing the French Water and Biodiversity Directorate.

Mrs. Mongellaz, project leader, as well as experts of the Rhone-Mediterranean and Corsica, Rhine-Meuse French Water Agencies and of IOWater also participated in this seminar.

### **Assistance to the Bulgarian Basin Directorates for the preparation of the Programs of Measures and Management Plans**

The important capacity building program for the Bulgarian Water Management Authorities began with the creation of the Technical Coordination Group. Composed of experts from the Ministry and each Bulgarian Basin Directorate, this group participates in all the training activities ; it is in charge of coordinating the project activities with work for drafting the Basin Management Plans.

### **A delegation of 12 Bulgarian executives of the Ministry and of the 4 Basin Directorates was received in Lyons in July 2009.**

The Rhone-Mediterranean & Corsica French Water Agency organized meetings for experience sharing on the preparation of the Programs of Measures and water tax systems, as well as visits in the field. The Bulgarian

delegation also particularly appreciated being invited to a session of the Rhone Basin Committee on 2 July 2009.

**Several assignments were carried out by French experts of the Water Agencies (Artois-Picardy, Rhone-Mediterranean & Corsica, Rhine-Meuse and Seine-Normandy), BRGM and IOWater for :  
n jointly analyzing with the Bulgarian experts the progress report on the Programs of Measures of the 4  
basins and identifying additional needs ;**

- reminding the expectations of the European Commission as regards reporting ;
- presenting the methods that can be used for estimating the effectiveness of measures, identifying and justifying exemptions, mitigating the lack of data ;
- refocusing the work to be carried out on the priorities.

## **Development of economic instruments**

The second objective of the project aims at helping with the revision of the water tax calculation system, to make it coherent with the recent modifications of the Bulgarian Water Law.

The interventions of French experts (François Guerber of the Rhone-Mediterranean and Corsica Agency, Delphine Passé of the Artois- Picardy Agency and Paul Haener of IOWater) dealt with the definition of the taxes (pollution parameters, rate.), and with the improvement of the information system linked to the recovery of these taxes.

Today these taxes are recovered by the Basin Directorates and transferred to the National Environment Fund ; the use of the product of these taxes for financing the Programs of Measures of the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) is also at the core of the discussions.

Mrs. Lubka Katchakova, who left her functions after ministerial reorganization, played an important part throughout the implementation of this French-Bulgarian twinning. The Bulgarian Project Leader is now the Director of the Water Management Department, Mrs. Zvetanka Dimitrova.

(The News N° 16 - December 2008)

The Bulgarian Ministry of Water and the Environment selected France as partner in the institutional twinning financed by the European Union, which will deal with WFD implementation and more particularly with the capacity building of the Bulgarian water management authorities for the preparation of the Programs of Measures and the implementation of economic instruments. This 18-month project will be led by IOWater, mandated by the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Regional Planning (MEEDDAT) for following up the twinning agreements in the water sector.

As a continuation of the cooperation, which has been developing for several years between the French Water Agencies and the Bulgarian Basin Directorates, the Artois- Picardy Water Agency will be widely involved in this project by delegating Arnaud Courtecuisse, Head of the Studies and Economic Evaluation Department, who will become the twinning resident adviser in Sofia, and various specialists who will participate in short appraisal expert missions. The Rhone-Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency will intervene with experts' assignments and study visits supervised by François Guerber, in charge of international activities. Experts from the MEEDDAT, BRGM

and IOWater will also contribute to the work dealing with :

- **a huge training program for the Bulgarian authorities on the development of Programs of Measures and economic analyses**, with the organization of training seminars and workshops in Bulgaria, two study tours to France, the use and adaptation of role playing games to the Bulgarian context, etc.
- **assistance with the revision of the tax computation** and levying system which will contribute to the financing of the Programs of Measures, and with the creation of the data-processing tool allowing the centralization of the information.

A **"Program of Measures and economics"** working group, made up of Bulgarian experts of the Ministry and of each Basin Directorate, was created for following up the project activities, analyzing the proposed methodologies, implementing tests in the pilot basin, contributing to the development of guidance documents and the dissemination of the experience gained to all the teams concerned by WFD implementation in Bulgaria. Exchanges have already started without waiting for the official project kick-off, with the organization of a 2-day seminar at the end of May 2008 at the French Embassy in Sofia.

The seminar was opened by Mrs. Lubka Katchakova, Vice-Minister in charge of water, who, with the support of Galina Balusheva, senior expert at the Water Protection Department, will supervise this project considered as a priority by the Bulgarian Authorities.

The seminar dealt with a first introduction to the French experience regarding the development of Programs of Measures and the drafting of a work plan to quickly launch the preparation of the programs of measures and public consultation which are the next steps in the WFD schedule in Bulgaria.