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Vietnam : Dong Nai pilot project - IWRM on tracks !

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(The News N° 21 - January 2011)

The Vietnamese Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE), created in 2002, has been entrusted with the implementation of Decree 120 issued in December 2008 to develop a policy for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in Vietnam.

In compliance with the French-Vietnamese agreements on water, the Dong Nai Basin pilot project aims to provide MONRE with :

- **A national institutional support** financed by the French Loire-Brittany and Seine- Normandy Water Agencies (400,000 €), implemented by IOWater with the expertise of the French Water Agencies.
- **Assistance to the development of Dong Nai management plan and surface water monitoring**, financed by the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Employment (800,000 €). It is implemented by SCE (pilot management plan) and Asconit Consultants (monitoring).

Year 2010 allowed putting on tracks the planned key actions :

- **A training/coaching plan for the national teams in charge of coordinating the preparation of management plans.** A first workshop on IWRM was followed by sectoral workshops addressing sectoral policy makers (agriculture, regulation of water regime and hydro - power, industry and management of domestic water services).
- **An analysis of water data on the Dong Nai Basin**, existing in the various national and regional institutions, with the development of a catalogue of shared data sources (metadata database).
- **An overall evaluation of the monitoring means and devices existing** in Vietnam and in the Dong Nai Basin, by checking their compliance with national policy requirements.
- **Finally, the structuring of the Vietnamese DWRPIS** (Division for Water Resources Planning and Investigation of South Vietnam) team in charge of preparing the pilot management plan.

A project steering committee associated highlevel personalities closely involved in French river basin management and cooperation with Vietnam, especially Messrs. Jacques Oudin, Serge Lepeltier, Tien Duc Nguye

Launching of the pilot project of Dong Nai River Basin

(The News N° 17 - February 2010)

With the cooperation memorandum, signed in June 2007 by the French and Vietnamese Ministers in charge of Sustainable Development, **year 2009 allowed the materialization of an ambitious bilateral cooperation project on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), which deals with the Dong Nai pilot Basin. It aims at providing :**

1. **An institutional assistance** to the National Authorities in charge of IWRM coordination, financed by the French Loire-Brittany and Seine-Normandy Water Agencies (€ 400,000) according to the French "Oudin-Santini" Law on decentralised cooperation. This part is implemented by IOWater and will largely rely on the expertise of the French Water Agencies.
2. **A technical assistance** financed by the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Employment for the development of surface water monitoring in the Dong Nai pilot Basin (€ 800,000). It will be implemented by SCE consulting firm and ASCONIT Consultants at the beginning of 2010.

The project implementation is planned over two years. The concepts of the European Water Framework Directive are used as reference for the analysis of Decree 120, new Vietnamese legislation directing IWRM since its publication in December 2008.

Kick-off seminar Hanoi, 20-21 October 2009

The Vietnamese Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE), the French Loire-Brittany and Seine-Normandy Water Agencies and the International Office for Water held on 20 and 21 October 2009 in Hanoi a 2-day seminar for the official launching of the Pilot Dong Nai Project, in the presence of Mr. Lai, Vietnamese Vice Minister for Water, and Mr. Bolot, French Ambassador. About sixty participants exchanged information on the Vietnamese and French experiments, on integrated planning at the level of river basins in particular :

- Presentation of the Vietnamese decree n° 120 and of the European Water Framework Directive ;
- Speeches of the managers of IWRM projects in Vietnam ;
- Introduction to the cooperation project on the pilot Dong Nai Basin.

During the second day, the discussions dealt with the practical understanding of the cooperation project, its timetable and the implementation methods of the agreement signed by the Ministry (MONRE) and the French Group led by IOWater.

The two French Loire-Brittany and Seine-Normandy Water Agencies were represented by Messrs. Oudin, Stein and Wulf who presented their experiments and thus orientated the implementation of the project.

Preparation of the French-Vietnamese cooperation program in the field of water

(The News N° 16 - December 2008)

A memorandum of cooperation was signed in June 2007 by the French and Vietnamese Ministers in charge of sustainable development.

Three priority cooperation topics were identified :

- Institutional assistance on integrated water resources management,
- Transfer of knowledge and technologies for the control of water management,
- Training on water resources conservation. In 2008, IOWater and its French partners developed the cooperation lines given at ministerial level into coordinated projects supported by various French donors.

Two ambitious projects thus could be studied and submitted to the Vietnamese Authorities :

1- Integrated Water Resources Management in the Dong Nai River Basin

This 24-month project (2009-2010) on integrated management of the Dong Nai River Basin will be implemented by the International Office for Water (IOWater), Asconit Consultants, SCE, and financed by the French Ministry of Economy, Finances and Employment, with an amount of Euros 800,000, and the French Loire-Brittany and Seine-Normandy Water Agencies with Euros 400,000.

With the metropolis of Ho Chi Minh City, the basin concentrates all the pressures on the water resource caused by strong human activity with still poorly controlled impacts.

If industrial pollution seems the most visible, it is doubled by an agricultural pollution coming in particular from the increasingly more intensive rice growing and an important urban pollution. The quantitative and morphological stakes are also very significant with the Dau Tieng Reservoir upstream of the Saigon River, which is the largest of the country. It is exploited for hydropower and is a reservoir for irrigation and the supply of drinking water to Ho Chi Minh City. The water transfers out of the basin towards dry coastal areas and low lands could also worsen the situation.

The institutional mechanisms for overall water management in the basin are still little developed in a context of strongly decentralized and sectoral management at the level of the 11 provinces located in the basin.

2- Flood risk management on the Saigon River

In Vietnam, the vulnerability of the populations and properties to floods increases with more real estate pressures on flood plains. This situation is particularly critical in the Ho Chi Minh City area, located downstream of the Saigon River.

The project for the protection against the floods of the Saigon River thus not only plans the construction of protection works but also an institutional support component, which aims at supporting the basin's local authorities in their organizational and strategic thinking about flood hazards.

This 24-month project of the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development is financed by the French Development Agency with Euros 350,000.

In order to coordinate its proposal for support, AFD asked IOWater to organize a mission for the formalization of this institutional component. This assignment, which was carried out in June 2008, had the following main objectives :

- collecting the opinion of the Vietnamese institutions concerned on the terms of reference of the project ;
- analyzing the respective responsibilities of the various organizations able to control the work of this French institutional support ;
- proposing a relevant institutional arrangement for its implementation ;
- making sure that this project is consistent with the various current cooperation projects.

The significance of work coordination and control on the basin scale was underlined. The Dong Nai Basin Organization (DNRBO), created in 2002, could be entrusted with this task.