



## **CABRI-Volga**

**Cooperation Along a Big River:  
Institutional coordination among stakeholders for  
environmental risk management in the Volga basin**

**Expert Group Meeting,  
Nizhny Novgorod, 28-29 September 2005**

### **Briefing Note**

## **Expert Group 1 "River and Environmental Rehabilitation"**

### **Objectives of the CABRI-Volga Project Phase "State-of-the-Art and Good Practices"**

- To provide the state-of-the-art in environmental risk management in large river basins
- To explore the status of coordination between institutions and multiple stakeholders, including civil society, business and water services providers, decision-makers, scientists
- To identify good and bad practices and lessons learned in coordination and cooperation between stakeholders

### **1. Introduction**

The first CABRI-Volga Expert Group Meeting in Nizhny Novgorod falls into the project's initial phase during which the state-of-the-art and good practices are being identified and analysed. Expert Group 1 (EG1) focuses on environmental rehabilitation of large river basins with a special emphasis on improvement of water quality in the Volga River basin. It explores major problems in water quality management and coordination of policies, tools and activities between multiple stakeholders. Their major focus is on the following problems that are cross-cutting for other sectoral expert groups:

- How to improve coordination of activities of organizations responsible for water quality and what tools can be used for this purpose
- How to effectively incorporate water quality rehabilitation activities into integrated river basin management
- Why are many of the existing strategies and programmes for water quality rehabilitation in large river basins not always effective in practice
- How to build stable and regular partnerships between multiple stakeholders, including water polluters and water users and how to increase their participation in environmental decision-making

During this Expert Group Meeting EG1 aims to discuss the state-of-the art and good practices in the thematic areas of:

#### **1) Integrated river basin management**

The lack of institutional cooperation, both within Russia and internationally, deficiencies in governance and in civil society involvement, potential conflicts between stakeholders and between multiple users, and low levels of cooperation between the academic and policy making institutions result in environmental and socio-economic risks in the Volga basin. Integrated river basin management is considered as a key instrument towards risk reduction and sustainable development.

## **2) Water quality management: standards and setting priorities**

International practice shows that efficient financial, technological and scientific management is an essential tool for the improvement of the environment. Management strategies have to foster a harmonious co-existence of humans and nature. Formation of institutional regimes, including development of environmental legislation and rules for nature protection tends to incorporate in a growing scale the local population participation in decision-making and public control over regulatory rules enforcement. Within environment management strategies larger attention is given to coordination with and regulating behavior of various businesses including industries and mining companies operating in large river basins.

## **3) Multi stakeholder approach as a tool to improve water quality and basin management**

This approach brings together all relevant stakeholders which have a role in integrated environmental risk management in large river basins. There is a need to exchange lessons learned from existing studies and practices and to discuss future initiatives, to examine how to strengthen the links between scientific knowledge and decision-making process, to assess current gaps in knowledge for better environmental governance, and to identify and explain problems in implementation. The emphasis is made on improving vertical and horizontal coordination between institutions and developing cooperation of stakeholders in the Volga basin. This approach is based on sharing knowledge and good practices in participatory patterns in the Volga basin with the partners from the EU countries.

## **4) Lessons from the Volga Revival Programme**

The Federal Volga Revival Programme, 1998-2004 is assessed as an interesting example of coordination activities between various stakeholders. It was managed by the RF Ministry for Natural Resources and financed by federal (8%), regional (57%) and local budgets and private investors (35%). About 23 ministries and government organizations as well as 40 research centers from 39 federation subjects took part in its development and implementation. The most important questions relate to assessment of its successes and failures and rich evidence from its realization.

## **2. EG1 Discussion Topics**

Some of the discussion topics and questions posed for expert assessment at the EG1 session are:

### **2.1. Integrated Water Management (IWM)**

- Comparison of weak and strong points in water management in Russia and the EU countries (legislative framework for IWM, including the new RF Water Code, Water Framework Directive, administrative reform in Russia, enforcement and control in Europe, European IWM experiences, basin agreements as a tool of IWM)
- How to improve cooperation of organizations responsible for water quality control and water management? How to build stable and regular partnerships between multiple stakeholders, including water polluters and water users in order to increase their participation in environmental decision-making?

### **2.2. Environmental monitoring and information support for stakeholders**

- Environmental monitoring as information basis for water management and risk assessment
- How to strengthen public commitment and awareness?
- How to build the most efficient information network to support multiple stakeholders participation in water and risk management?

### **2.3. Economic growth and impacts on the environment**

- Russian and European experience
- Possible tools and mechanisms for combining economic development and environmental risk reduction:
  - economic growth as a result sectoral changes (logistic network development and relevant high-techs)
  - technological development and environmental management
  - control and enforcement
- Socio-economic and environmental aspects within cost and benefits assessment

## **2.4. Development and implementation of strategies and programmes to improve water quality**

- European and Russian experience in rehabilitation activities, including the Rhine action programme, the Volga Revival Programme
- Good tools and practices, including target indicators
- Lessons learned and recommendations

**Please feel free to suggest additional questions for the EG1 session. If possible, send them to [ivanov@nngasu.ru](mailto:ivanov@nngasu.ru) before 21 September. Thank you!**

## **3. Relevant Bibliography**

Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy. Official Journal L 327 , 22/12/2000 P. 0001 – 0073

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Naydenko V., 2003. The Great Volga at the Frontier of Millennium. From Environmental Crisis to Sustainable Development. Vol.1, N. Novgorod (in Russian)

Outcome of the Rhine Action Programme, ICPR, 2003

RF Water Code, *Draft*