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TRANSBOUNDARY ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION (TEC) Project:
Profile of environmental problems in region Ukraine - neighboring countries (Russia, Romania,
Moldova and Hungary)

The introduction

In the Declaration of 4-th Environment Ministers Conference (June 23-25, 1998, Aarhus, Denmark) the Ministers specifically stressed the importance of the NGO participation in the environmental policy making process and the necessity of close cooperation between different sectors of society in the decision making process for providing the development and implementation of effective environmental programs. Taking into consideration the economy in transition process both in Ukraine, and in the NIS, the co-ordination of actions, intersectoral cooperation and economic grounded technologies of the environmental planning and management are important for practical implementation of main directions of the environmental policy of Ukraine both on the national, and local levels.

Taking into consideration mentioned above, in 1999 the Organization "Gromadyanska Initsiatyva" (OGI) International drafted the program " The Municipal Environmental Initiative". The main objective of this program is providing the assistance (*methodological, advisory, expert, organizational, and other assistance*) to local self-governments, local executive authorities and oblast state administrations of Ukraine in the elaboration (or correction) of the Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) with the integrated investment component, the economic methods for the implementation of the Environmental Protection Programs, which are under development or already have been developed by the administrative - territorial units of Ukraine. The program is the continuation of work started within the SOFIA+3 Project on the NGO evaluation of National Environmental Action Plans in the NIS, which was presented on the 4-th Environment Ministers Conference in Aarhus in June, 1998, where the nongovernmental organizations from the NIS have approved the results of the Project and have determined main directions of NGO common activity for the future, including the promotion in the development and implementation of Local Environmental Action Plans. The program has a few implementation phases.

Since 1999 the implementation of the Initialization Phase of the program (first phase) is started. The phase foresees the identification of urgent environmental problems at the local level and the identification of possible mechanisms and instruments for their resolving, including the transboundary cooperation.

In view of the implementation of the first phase of program the Organization "Gromadyanska Initsiatyva" International in partnership with the United Nations Development Program in Ukraine, under support of the International «Renaissance» (George Soros) Foundation: East - East Program and co-operation with the Ministry of the environment and natural resources of Ukraine during 1999-2000 have carried out four bilateral regional meetings on the problems of transboundary cooperation for the resolving environmental problems on the near-boundary territories of Ukraine and neighboring countries, such as Moldova, Russia, Romania and Hungary. It is planning to conduct the similar meetings between Ukraine and other neighboring countries too.

The main aim of the bilateral meetings is the transboundary environmental problems identification, search of the effective environmental management tools, development of practical approaches concerning the resolving of the transboundary environmental problems between Ukraine and neighboring countries. The questions related to possible forms of cooperation of Major groups to enable more effective resolving of these problems, and opportunities for integration of the meeting recommendations into Local Environmental Action Plans as part of local programs on socio-economic development of local communities had been also discussed at the meetings.

The important component of the meetings mentioned above is also promoting establishment of the co-operation between different groups of local communities on practical resolving the urgent transboundary environmental problems and related to this the social and economic problems of the communities. The representatives of related central official institutions, scientific institutions, local governments, state environmental protection departments and non-governmental organizations of near-boundary territories from each of countries and also representatives from embassies, UN Economic Commission for Europe, UNDP, USAID etc. participated in the meetings.

The results of the meetings it is expected to take into consideration within the Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) elaboration /correction process and within development of the environmentally sound entrepreneurship in the border-line regions of Ukraine participated in the meetings.

The importance of the mentioned above meetings for development and implementation of the LEAPs is as follow:

1. The results of the SOFIA+3 Project have shown, that the co-ordination of the environmental protection actions of Major Groups of the society, appropriate official institutions of Ukraine and neighboring countries remains very weak. Better coordination of efforts on resolving of common environmental problems is necessary to prevent or resolve common environmental problems more effectively.
2. The integration of common coordinated activities into LEAPs will essentially reduce expenses of the countries involved on implementation of LEAPs, and this is not only economically beneficial. It will also create a favorable political climate for partial involvement of external financial sources, what comes up from the articles 5 and 45 of the 4-th Environment Ministers Conference Declaration.

3. Similar activity stimulate the cooperation and participation of Major Groups of neighboring countries in the decision making process and promote more effective realization of the Convention on access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters.

Simultaneously with carrying out of the bilateral meetings the Organization "Gromadyanska Initsiatyva" International in partnership with the UNDP, UN Center of Human Settlements and Municipal Management Center (Kiev) is working on the methodology and economic grounded tools for the LEAPs development and implementation with the integrated investment component. The last one will enable not only much easier integration of the LEAPs into the programs of socio-economic development of local communities, but also will create possibility to make the LEAPs partially self-sustaining due to the investment component. The available as for today know-how methods allow to assume, that in the nearest future the LEAPs can become one of the main instruments for the economic development of the regions of Ukraine in according to the requirements of modern standards.

Bilateral meeting for region Ukraine - Republic of Moldova"

(February 8 - 11, 1999, Kyiv)

During the meeting the following transboundary environmental problems between Ukraine and Republic of Moldova were identified.

PROBLEMS

1. Quality of drinking water.
2. Preservation and rational use of biological resources (basins of Dniester river and Danube river lakes).
3. Water resources management. Absence of the coordinated management system in the rivers' basins.
4. Absence of the coordinated normative and legislative basis for the transboundary cooperation. A discrepancy between national normative and legislative basis in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova and acting international standards.
5. Low effectiveness of the mutual informing and notification system.
6. Absence of effective mechanisms of environmental programs' integration into the state programs of socio-economic development.
7. Absence of the risk evaluation system (for example, risk of the unregulated arms accumulation).
8. Absence of effective management systems of the transboundary waste transfer.
9. Not effective planning of common actions on prevention and elimination of extreme situations' consequences.

Among the mentioned above problems were determined

URGENT PROBLEMS

1. Quality of drinking water.
2. Absence of the coordinated normative and legislative basis for the transboundary cooperation. A discrepancy between national normative and legislative basis in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova and acting international standards.
3. Preservation and rational use of bioresources (basins of Dniester river and Danube river lakes).
4. Absence of the coordinated management system in the rivers' basins.

Bilateral meeting for region Ukraine - Russian Federation''

(March 29 - April 1, 1999, Kyiv)

During the discussion the joint transboundary environmental problems, which take place on the border between Ukraine and Russian Federation were determined. They were combine into seven blocks of problems related to:

1. *Resources*

- Protection and rational usage of water resources.
- Protection, reproduction of wild flora and fauna.
- Reproduction of fish resources. Saving and restoring of Azov's migratory fish natural regeneration.
- International trade by natural resources, objects wild flora and fauna under threat of extinction

2. *Anthropogenous influences*

- Problem of sea dumps and bottom deeping.
- Problem of bottom sediments.
- Problem of water collection of the small rivers.
- Problem transboundary transfer of contaminants in the atmospheric air.
- Decrease of the transboundary transfer of Severskij Donets river.
- Anthropogenous pressure on the Black and Azov seas environment.
- Destruction of Azov- Black seas coastal zone.

3. *Function, means and methods of management*

- Monitoring transboundary transfer of pollutants in water and air environments.
- Radioenvironmental monitoring in the transboundary zone.
- The control of water in the transboundary rivers used as source of drinking water.

4. *Normative - legal base*

Harmonization of legislative and normative base of two countries:

- Norms and standards of quality of the environment, including Miximum Allowed Concentrations;
- Mechanism of penalty for the violation of the environmental legislation on the interstate

level;

- Financial and economic mechanism of joint programs' and investment projects' implementation;

Development of the mechanism of public participation within resolving of transboundary environmental problems

5. *Methodological maintenance*

- Methodological base of two countries, including the technique of the damage value definition and compensation in case of the accident.

6. *The organizational unit*

- Creation permanent:
the Ukrainian part of the Azov interparliamentary commission, common expert council, foundation of the development of the Azov basin.
- Absence of common informational system at basin's level.

7. *The socio economic unit*

- Environmental problems and socio economic development.

Bilateral meeting for region Ukraine-Romania

(5-8 April 2000, Chernivtsi, Ukraine)

The seminar was conducted as a training, and it was expected that the participants will elaborate the propositions concerning existing transboundary environmental problems and concerning the economic grounded Common strategy of co-operation for practical resolving of the transboundary environmental problems identified.

At the beginning of the meeting for representatives from each country the possibility to present their own vision of environmental problems, which are actual for the near-boundary territories, was provided. The Ukrainian and Romanian participants of the meeting gave for consideration more than 30 environmental problems of this region.

From all the problems participants of the meeting and experts from Ukraine and Romania indicated 10 main transboundary environmental problems in Ukraine – Romania region. They are:

1. Contamination of water.
2. Contamination of the atmospheric air.
3. Problem of the environmental ideology creation.
4. Degradation of soil.
5. Contamination by waste, in particular toxiferous.
6. Contamination of ecosystems.
7. Low level of public involving into resolving of the environmental problems.
8. Excessive exploitation of natural resources.
9. Absence of effective mechanisms and instruments of the implementation and control for the

environmental legislation.

10. The degradation of the landscape.

During the work in focus groups the participants have offered possible approaches to resolve the specific transboundary environmental problems. Also policy and strategy of the local governments in the resolving of these problems (8 main problems) were suggested.

Bilateral meeting for region Ukraine-Hungary

(17-20 May 2000, Kyiv, Ukraine)

Based on the experience obtained during the previous meetings, this meeting had the following essential differences:

1. The seminar was conducted as a two-days training session, which design was developed by the Organization "Gromadyanska Initsiatyva" International with the experience obtained during the previous meetings, methods of the UN Center of Human Settlements [UNCHS (Habitat)] and UN Environmental Program [UNEP].
2. One of the key components of the meeting and instrument for practical resolving of the transboundary environmental problems was studying the possibilities for the development of environmental safety entrepreneurship in this region. In this relation the experts from the State Committee of Ukraine for regulatory policy and entrepreneurship were also invited.

The participants of the meeting classified the transboundary environmental problems of the region to a few main categories: WATER; AIR, TRANSPORTATION; FORESTS, LAND USE are also indicated the following urgent transboundary environmental problems:

I category - WATER

1. Availability of polluters in basin of the rivers of Tisa, Danube, including industrial and municipal waste.
2. Transport contamination of waters.
3. Nonrational water use.
4. Absence of the anti-flood constructions.
5. Stabilization of the mountain rivers' channel.

II category - AIR, TRANSPORTATION

1. Problem of the transboundary transfer of contaminations. Industrial air pollution (transport contamination).
2. Uncontrolled transport corridor.

3. Transport loading in entry points on boundary. Transportation of dangerous materials.

III category - FOREST, LAND USE

1. Uncontrolled forests' cutting down, that leads to erosion of soil, disturbance of their chemistry and holding-up of water.
2. Poor restoring of the forests.
3. Problem of a rational land use. The incorrect forms of usage of the soil (destruction of the plant covering).
4. Absence of the unified system of landscape planning.
5. Saving of the landscape and biological diversity.

As a result of common discussions and consultings such three most significant problems were indicated:

1. Contamination of water of Tisa river by the sewage of the industrial enterprises and other polluters.
2. Saving and restoring of valuable natural ecosystems of the region of Upper Tisa.
3. Lack of the appropriate transport infrastructure developed.

During the work of all meeting the propositions concerning the approaches for practical resolving of the transboundary environmental problems by common efforts were developed. At the meetings the questions of possible forms of co-operation between different sectors of communities in Ukraine and neighboring countries for more effective resolving of these problems, and also possibilities of integration into LEAPs and local programs of the social and economic development of the economically grounded approaches for resolving of the transboundary environmental problems were considered.

More detailed information on the mentioned above regional meetings is presented in the Information bulletins OGI Update [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#).