



**RESEAU INTERNATIONAL DES ORGANISMES DE BASSIN  
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANIZATIONS  
RED INTERNACIONAL DE ORGANISMOS DE CUENCA  
Международная сеть водохозяйственных организаций**

**Report to SCG - Meeting 6th November 2008  
Conclusions of the 6<sup>th</sup> EUROPE-INBO 2008 Conference (Sibiu, 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008)**

The International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) aims at facilitating **operational exchanges among basin organizations**. It was created in 1994 to mobilize the experience of organizations directly responsible for the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) at river basin level. INBO is currently present all around the world, with 188 members in 68 countries. INBO could be considered as **“the voice of basin organizations”**.

In Europe, the **EUROPE-INBO Group for WFD implementation** was created in November 2003 to enable Basin Organizations and District Authorities to meet regularly in an informal way, exchange their practical experience, identify operational problems and make field-oriented proposals.

In Europe, INBO relies also on two regional networks, which are also members of the SCG:  
- the Central and Eastern European Network of Basin Organizations (**CEENBO**);  
- the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (**MENBO**).

The "EUROPE-INBO 2008" conference took place in **Sibiu, Romania**, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3 October 2008, at the invitation of the Romanian Authorities. It gathered **195 participants coming from 27 countries**. Many case studies were presented and exchanges were particularly fruitful. **Non-EU countries were very present in the discussions**, proof of their growing interest in the WFD.

## **WORKSHOP 1 – ELABORATION OF PROGRAMMES OF MEASURES**

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A huge work has been done in river basin districts. But important challenges are remaining.

### ***Relevant scales and involvement of local stakeholders***

- The Programmes of Measures should be developed on relevant hydrographic scales, **not only at the large river basin level, but also in a more detailed manner on sub-basin level**.
- The practical implementation necessitates the involvement of **local politico-administrative stakeholders (municipalities, provinces, counties, departments, regions), who will be front-liners** for the investments and functioning of water utilities. They will be in charge of the concrete implementation with all economic interested parties (farmers, industrialists, fishermen, tourism, etc).
- We now enter in **an operational step** which relies less on governmental procedures than on local projects. That is why the procedure of consultation defined in the WFD is not sufficient as itself to mobilize local stakeholders. It must be paid much attention to a better explanation of the WFD approach: the effective implementation of the Programmes of Measures is conditioned to the recognition of their added value by the managers of the territories.
- It is also of utmost **importance for State authorities to mobilize themselves**: they must be the first involved, by enforcing basic measures, controlling the effective implementation of regulations, and accompanying local stakeholders in their projects, taking into account that, in certain countries, the governmental authorities are not the main contracting authorities neither the main donors in the water sector.

### *Time factor, uncertainties and need for mobilization*

- As the deadline of 2015 will come very quickly, it is necessary to **launch right from now the measures for which there are no more debates**, on the basis of the draft which is already known, without waiting for the formal adoption of the Programme of Measures at the end of 2009.
- We still have a lot of **uncertainties about the real efficiency of certain measures** (on hydromorphology, groundwaters, wetlands, ...).
- Even for the measures recognized as efficient, there are uncertainties about the necessary time to realize the projects on the field (it is clear that some of them will not be started before 2015), the necessary time to obtain positive results (environments can take a long time to react), and whether it will be in the timeframe of the WFD deadlines. The **time factor** is indeed of prime importance.
- It is also very important to exchange on criteria for disproportionate costs. INBO is considering the creation of an internal working group on economic analyses to share information between basin organizations in view of **a more common approach of exemptions and extensions of delays**.
- The complete implementation of pre-existing “nitrates” and “waste water” Directives must be at core of the Programmes of Measures. It is in particular necessary **to fill the gap in waste water treatment**, i.e. implement the UWWTP Directive and also go beyond where necessary.
- **INBO calls for a true mobilization concerning agriculture.** The Programmes of Measures must include strong measures and action must be coordinated at the European level, being given the lack of ambition noted in the preparatory documents of the CAP Health Check. It was underlined that, even with a proactive approach, it will be very difficult to obtain positive results on the quality of water and ecosystems in 2015 and even in 2021. **Without a true reform of the CAP, it will be almost impossible to change this situation.**
- INBO recommends to **increase the means devoted to wetlands and hydromorphology**. The functional restoration of aquatic environments is of prime importance for achieving good status.
- It is urgent to reinforce the **protection measures for groundwater, to make for lost time**.

### *Definition of realistic objectives*

- The definition of objectives is still a major concern for a lot of basin organizations despite the works conducted within the CIS on exemptions and delays. Indeed, information has not been fully disseminated or **remains unclear / difficult to understand for basin organizations**.
- The WFD implementation will have **a huge cost** and can represent an important additional financial effort maybe up to +30 % in some districts, probably implying the same increase on water price. It asks the question of acceptability by users, especially in a context of economic crisis. It is necessary to have debates on the financing, even if discussions can be hard! **Who will pay and how much?**
- **A significant percentage of water bodies would not reach good status in 2015.** A rapid survey carried out during the workshop with the attending basin representatives shows that the % of water bodies achieving good status in 2015 in their basins could vary a lot, between 25% and 75%. Exemptions will be necessary, not only because of technical aspects but also on account of **financing capacities and the ability to pay of the population**. The objectives would only be reached when the corresponding financial mobilization is possible.
- The **issue of oversea territories** was underlined, especially the lack of specific references, still widely inexistent, regarding water management and WFD implementation. It appeared necessary to adapt WFD implementation to EU peripheral areas: improving knowledge of their specific environments and defining suited reference frames ; defining a specific framework around the WFD principles for exchange and regional cooperation with their non-European particular neighbours (example : Caribbean countries, Brazil, Indian Ocean,...). Indeed, this cooperation cannot be conducted on the same basis as for neighbouring countries of European continent!

## WORKSHOP 2 – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FLOODS DIRECTIVE

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- The Floods Directive provides an essential European framework and gives a strong signal: it is no more only a question of building defence infrastructures, but of adopting an **integrated prevention policy**. Besides, if dams and dikes are still indispensable to protect populations and goods, it is necessary to reduce their environmental impacts and to realise they induce a false sense of security.
- The Floods Directive is a revolution in practices. Among others, the centennial flood is not considered as a maximum for flood management, but as a “medium” event.
- As for the WFD, it is necessary to adopt an integrated approach: it is necessary **to pass from flood control to flood risk management**. This means true changes in policies, institutions, decision-making processes. An integrated prevention policy must rely on 4 pillars: forecasting flooding events, reducing vulnerability, protecting people and goods, alerting and educating populations.
- The implementation of the Floods Directive and WFD should be closely coordinated. But coordination difficulties are encountered in practice, because the **administrations in charge of the floods risks and IWRM are often distinct or act on different territories/scales**.
- INBO recommends integrating right from now some elements of the flood risk management plans into the 1<sup>st</sup> WFD river basin management plans (2009-2015) and the totality in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ones (2015-2021). It would be useful to develop a guide of good practices to take into account both directives.
- The presentations showed the **advantage of a proactive and integrated prevention policy**: protection of wetlands and floodplains, maintenance of rivers, management of sediment transport, coordination between riparian States of transboundary rivers, as well as the education of populations are essential components. As a whole, the amounts invested in effective prevention are lower than the costs of avoided damages. But **it will be difficult to invest as much as necessary for the prevention of exceptional floods... all the more that their frequency should increase with climate change**.
- The implementation of Flood Directive requires the increase of **exchanges of knowledge and good practices** between Member States, preparation of national strategies and support to local authorities.

## WORKSHOP 3 – WFD IMPLEMENTATION IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS

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- The WFD brings **real added value** in European transboundary basins, by providing a common reference framework (objectives, methods, deadlines, common planning documents). It increases exchange of information and coordination between riparian States, thus contributing to European integration. Where they exist, the positive **role of international commissions** was underlined.
- The work completed in the international districts shared by EU and non-EU countries is encouraging. The WFD can also inspire other areas in the world, since its approach is transferable.
- But huge work is still needed. Management Plans of International River Basin Districts (IRBD) still too often look like a **patchwork of national elements**, as each Member State remains responsible vis-à-vis the Commission for the WFD implementation in what it is concerned. It is rather the sum of national plans, but more coordinated as before, which is already a progress!
- Although WFD gives a common frame, the national legislations are remaining different in the same international district, which puts a brake on a complete integration. Besides, it appears that the countries do not have the same priorities and deadlines, even for the same types of measures.
- The concerned basin organizations highlighted **specific constraints and needs for IRBD**:

Constraints	Needs
Workload, languages, coordination constraints	mobilize more human and financial resources for WFD implementation in each national part of IRBD & in parallel reinforce those of international commissions
Capacity building	launch joint professional training programs for the staff concerned
Position of international commissions	reinforce the role of international commissions in the decision making process
Economic analyses	carry out work to identify differences in methods, to harmonize criteria and to develop common socioeconomic indicators between riparian countries

Information systems	coordinate the monitoring systems and design overall information systems on a transboundary basin scale with agreements for sharing data
Coordination of measures	better coordinate actions and give more ambition to the roof report which should become a guidance document for management of the whole international district
Public participation	carry out a true joint consultation on the shared stakes while relying on the international commissions, coordinate not only the consultation procedure but also its contents in order to develop a feeling of membership to the international district, organize joint consultations of interested parties
Groundwater	implement urgently a joint management of transboundary aquifers, develop specific agreements or extend existing ones to groundwater
Non-EU riparian countries	reinforce cooperation programs with the EU neighbor countries (the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, Balkans) within the European Neighborhood Policy, develop twinning agreements between countries or between basins

## **OTHER TOPICS DISCUSSED**

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### ***Role of INBO in the CIS***

- Considering the great importance of the CIS process, the participants of the Sibiu meeting wished that INBO invests more in its participation in the CIS and ask to the European Commission and Member States to include BO experts in some CIS working groups.
- In this way, INBO is preparing a communication on “WFD contribution to water management in transboundary basins” at the next Water Directors meeting on 24-25 November 2008. The goal will be to present, from the angle of the basin organizations, an analysis of the implementation at transboundary level, to evidence what goes well or not, and to identify needs and recommendations.
- A list of contact persons really in charge of the implementation in each district would be very useful, especially for the countries which only designed national administrations as competent authorities. With focal points in all European river basin districts, INBO could organize wider exchanges.
- The participants reported very positive outcomes of the twinning arrangements concluded within the TWINBASIN Project. They regret that this programme is now completed and wish that its continuation could also be supported by European fundings in the future.

### ***Research development and science-policy interface at EU level***

- It is clear that WFD strongly renews the research needs. It is important to share experience, identify needs, coordinate research programs and disseminate results under a usable form for practitioners.
- A specific workshop was held on the IWRM-Net project in order to establish a link between researchers and basin organizations and establish priorities for the 2nd transnational research program, planned end 2009/beginning 2010 (more information: <http://iwrn-net.eu>).
- Added value of the SPI-Water Project (dedicating part of its efforts to the transfer of IWRM knowledge to non-European countries) was underlined.
- The idea of a "science-policy interface" within the CIS was supported.
- It is also necessary to facilitate the use of existing fragmented sources of information (CIRCA, WISE-RTD, WSSTP, HELP, IWRM-Net, etc.) which are much more usable for ministries than for authorities in the districts. INBO is considering presenting such a project – focused on districts needs – which would be entitled “INBO-wfd”, to future calls for proposals of the European Commission.

### ***Preparation of the 5th World Water Forum (Istanbul, March 2009)***

INBO was entrusted with the coordination of topic 3.1: “Basin Management and Transboundary Cooperation” jointly with UNESCO. It participates to the European Regional Process and has been entrusted by the European Water Partnership (EWP) to prepare the sessions and the corresponding chapter “Basin Management and Transboundary Cooperation” of the European Regional Document (this chapter highlights the WFD, the UNECE Helsinki Convention and the basin component of EUWI). In addition, INBO is preparing a joint handbook with GWP on IWRM implementation in river basins; it will be presented at the World Water Forum and will report success stories of the WFD.

*The Presidency of the EUROPE-INBO Group was handed from Italy to Romania for the year to come. The next conference will be held in Ukraine in autumn 2009. The final resolutions, presentations, photographs are available on: [www.inbo-news.org](http://www.inbo-news.org).*