



INCEPTION REPORT

Integrating multiple benefits of wetlands and floodplains into improved transboundary management for the Tisza River Basin

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Acronyms

CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
ES	Environmental Status Indicator
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
IRBM	Integrated River Basin Management
IW	International Waters
IW:LEARN	GEF's International Waters Learning Exchange Resources Network
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	Medium Sized Project
P	Process Indicator
PIU	Programme Implementation Unit
PM	Project Manager
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SR	Stress Reduction Indicator
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to project

The Tisza River is the largest tributary of the Danube River Basin and includes part of the territory of Ukraine, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Romania and Republic of Serbia. Over the last 150 years the basin has been subject to significant anthropogenic impacts that have resulted in a significantly degraded system, particularly in terms of pollution and the loss of floodplains and wetlands. In addition, predictions indicate that future growth of agriculture, coupled with climatic changes that already produce record flooding, will increase pressures on the available water resources. These problems require a concerted action by all the Tisza River Basin countries to develop and implement a more ecosystem-based approach to integrated river basin management and to address, as a priority, wetlands and floodplain restoration and management.

The UNDP/GEF project will provide support in developing an integrated strategy for water quality and water quantity that is incremental to the current work. The UNDP/GEF project will also implement demonstration projects that test the multiple environmental benefits of wetlands to mitigate impacts of floods and droughts and help to reduce nutrient pollution. Implementation of demonstration projects will showcase concrete advantages of an integrated land and water resource management at the community-level that will also lead to improved livelihoods of local communities. The results will also be an important step in delivering changes to current policies on wetlands and floodplains in the Tisza River Basin. The practical work will be undertaken through local organizations.

The project, executed through the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS), will be organized under the umbrella of the ICPDR, as this organization is responsible for the management of the whole Danube River Basin and has established the ‘Tisza Group’ to manage the Tisza River Basin. In addition to the ICPDR, GEF and UNDP, the main project partners are the national governments of the Tisza River Basin, the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and the European Commission.

1.2 Objectives

The **objectives** of this MSP are two fold:

1. To **integrate** water quality, water quantity, land use, and biodiversity objectives within **integrated water resources/river basin management (IWRM/IRBM)** under the legal umbrella of the EU and ICPDR, and;
2. To begin implementation of IWRM principles through the testing of new approaches on wetland and floodplain management through community-based demonstration. The community-level pilot activities will link to the development and implementation of an agreed river basin management plan following the principles of IWRM and tested at the regional/local level under the governance arrangements established for management of the Tisza River Basin. The integration of water quality and quantity management is considered to be a significantly **innovative** approach in the basin and the results of this will be utilised elsewhere in the Danube River Basin through catalytic policies and actions of the ICPDR.

These objectives will be achieved through two main components:

- To **integrate** water quality, water quantity, land use, and biodiversity objectives within **integrated water resources/river basin management** under the legal umbrella of the EU and ICPDR; and,

- To begin implementation of IWRM principles through the testing of new approaches on wetland and floodplain management through community-based demonstration.

1.3 Project Components

1.3.1 Component 1 - Integration of water quality, water quantity, land use, and biodiversity objectives within integrated water resources/river basin management under the legal umbrella of the EU and ICPDR

- Activity 1: Strategies for pollution reduction
- Activity 2: Strategies for flood & drought mitigation
- Activity 3: Integration of strategies
- Activity 4: Dissemination & replication

Outcomes:

- Agreements on water balance strategies through floodplains and wetlands
- Agreement on strategies to reduce / retain pollution by floodplains and wetlands
- Adoption and implementation of an **integrated** management plan
- Replication plan

1.3.2 Component 2 - Implementation of IWRM principles through the testing of new approaches on wetland and floodplain management through community-based demonstration

- Activity 1: Identification of potential demonstration sites and projects
- Activity 2: Agreement on final demonstration projects
- Activity 3: Implementation of demonstration projects
- Activity 4: Presentation of results
- Activity 5: Replication strategy

Outcomes:

- Agreement through stakeholder consultation on demonstration sites
- Implementation and evaluation of demonstration projects
- Demonstration projects influence on integrated river basin management plan
- Demonstration projects influence on local communities
- Replication plan

2 Project Implementation

An overall project implementation time plan is included in Annex 7

2.1 Project Management

2.1.1 Project Implementation Unit

The project was designed to be executed through the ICPDR utilising its existing structures where possible. A part-time project manager and a full time assistant form the Project Implementation Unit. Terms of References for both these positions are included in Annex 3. An outline of the responsibilities of the PIU staff are indicated below.

Responsibilities of the Project Manager / CTA include:

- Overall project management

- Reporting to PSC, ICPDR, UNDP/UNOPS
- Preparation of consultant's ToRs
- M&E management plan (see Annex 5)
- Replication and dissemination strategy and implementation
- Technical inputs for Components 1 and 2

Responsibilities of Project Assistant / Technical Assistant include:

- To assist CTA in project / technical management
- Component 1: to contribute and co-ordinate the development of strategies and integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan
- Component 2: to support the CTA in the implementation of demonstration projects
- To assist with the reporting to PSC/ICPDR/Tisza Group
- Administration of the project website and supporting the CTA with dissemination of project activities and results.

The PIU is responsible for co-ordinating activities between the other co-funding partners.

2.1.2 Inception Meeting

A project inception meeting was arranged back-to-back with an ICPDR Standing Working Group Meeting. This enabled all the Heads of Delegation to participate in the inception meeting at minimum inconvenience.

The Inception Meeting was supported by an additional contract between ICPDR and UNOPS while the main agreement was being finalised.

A report on the Inception Meeting is attached as Annex 2. The key points from this meeting include:

- 1 **National Experts** recruitment: the members of the PSC requested that terms of references should be distributed to the UNDP/GEF Tisza MSP contacts in each country to co-ordinate the identification of National Experts required by the project.
- 2 **Regional Experts:** the presentations given by the PIU had foreseen the need for 'Regional' Experts to develop strategies for flood/drought and pollution reduction with an emphasis on wetlands and floodplains.
- 3 **Demonstration projects:** all countries indicated their interest in participation in the demonstration projects and the importance of the criteria used for selection the projects.
- 4 **Future Project Steering Committee Meetings:** documents requiring discussion / approval will be distributed at least a week prior to future PSC meetings.

Proposed short-term activities

- 1 Developing Terms of References for expert assistance to the MSP.
- 2 Outline strategies on flood/drought mitigation and pollution reduction with a focus on improved use of wetlands and floodplains;
- 3 A detailed Inception Report (including work plan, ToRs, management procedures, etc) will be developed by the PIU and distributed to the National Contacts for the project (this Report)

- 4 Planning the 1st UNDP/GEF Tisza MSP workshop to be held back-to-back with the planned 11th Tisza Group Meeting (September 2008).

2.1.3 Project Steering Committee

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be organised to undertake an annual review of the project's activities and to approve the proposed workplans for the next reporting period. Following the agreement at the Project Inception Meeting, the future PSC will be organised back-to-back with the ICPDR's Ordinary Meeting held in December in Vienna. This will enable the Heads of Delegation to the ICPDR (and key members of the PSC) to participate at minimum inconvenience. The following participants were recommended to the Inception Meeting to form the PSC:

- Heads of Delegation (or their nominated deputy) to the ICPDR from the Tisza Countries;
- One Tisza Group expert from each country;
- UNDP
- UNEP
- European Commission
- Observers (including other interested stakeholders)

2.1.4 ICPDR Tisza Group

The UNDP/GEF Tisza MSP will organise a half – one day workshop back-to-back with the ICPDR's Tisza Group meetings to ensure the ease of participation from the regular Tisza experts. The workshops will focus on the two main components of the MSP and provide an opportunity for comment and feedback from the Tisza experts.

2.1.5 Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The MSP will utilise best practice with regards to M&E requirements of the UNDP and GEF. A detailed breakdown of the project logframe and the Project Results Framework is presented in Annex 8. Progress against the indicators shown in these logframes will be reported to the PSC and in periodic reports to the UNDP and UNOPS. The Tisza MSP will also organise independent mid-term and terminal evaluations of the project.

3 Project Budget

The overall project budget (GEF grant and co-funding) was presented in the Inception Meeting and the ProDoc (see Annex 2 and Annex 1). It was recognised during the Inception Meeting that the devaluation of the USD since the original budget for this MSP was prepared will have an impact on the level of work that can be undertaken but it was agreed that resources to undertake the proposed work, in support of the activities undertaken by the countries and the Tisza Group, were sufficient.

3.1 Overall GEF Budget Allocation

The following table gives the split of the GEF budget between the two main components and the management (technical and administrative) activities of the PIU. (The figures are net of UNOPS management costs)

	USD			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Component 1				
International Experts	0	15000	15000	30000

National Experts	30000	30,000	10,000	70000
Travel	15000	10,000	5,000	30000
Communications	10000	10,000	0	20000
Component 2				0
International Experts	0	0	20,000	20000
National Experts	15000	15,000	10,000	40000
Restoration projects	90000	240,000	50,000	380000
Travel	15000	10,000	5,000	30000
Communications	10000	0	10,000	20000
PIU				0
Project Management	31000	29,500	29,500	90000
Technical Activities C1&C2	67400	67300	65,300	200000
Total				930000

3.2 Co-funded Activities

In addition to the work planned with the support of the GEF grant, the other main co-funders are covering the costs (in-kind and cash) of the following activities.

3.2.1 Beneficiary Countries

- Participation of technical experts in the Tisza Group meetings
- Rotated organisation of the Tisza Group meetings
- Contribution to the preparation of the Tisza River Basin Management Plan
- National data transfer
- National data validation
- Validation of the text of the Tisza River Basin Management Plan (official feedbacks and comments)

3.2.2 ICPDR

- PIU – Management facilities
- Technical contribution from ICPDR EGs and Permanent Secretariat staff
- Coordination of Tisza Group activities
- Financial administration

3.2.3 UNDP

- Technical assistance in developing demonstration projects
- Stakeholder meetings
- Workshops
- Support of land / water integration demonstration project

3.2.4 UNEP (Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention)

- Capacity building WS on mining hotspots
- Cooperation with the CWI (Carpathian Wetland Initiative)

3.2.5 European Commission

- The support of the European Commission has already been utilised in 2007 - 2008: EU Grant – TISAR 2007
- Website: http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-pages/tisar_2007.htm
- Main output: ‘Analysis of the Tisza River Basin – 2007’

4 Project Activities

4.1 Component 1

This Component is based largely on the work undertaken under the EC co-funded project (TISAR) and will also receive practical results and experience from Component 2 activities on pilot demonstrations. The following key activities are planned under component 1.

- **Flood/drought and pollution strategies.** An outline for the strategies will be developed by the PIU and presented for discussion at the 11th Tisza Group Meeting/Project workshop (September 2009). Following agreement on the outline, national consultants will be requested to provide relevant national data and strategies for inclusion in a basin-wide strategy. The basin wide strategy will be synthesised by the PIU based on national contributions. This document will be submitted for comment to the 12th Tisza Group Meeting / Project Workshop (February 2009).
- **Preparation for integration of strategies.** At the 12th Tisza Group Meeting / Project workshop a detailed discussion on the development of national and transboundary integration (flood/drought and pollution) strategies and how this can be incorporated in an integrated river basin management plan. National Consultants will prepare national integration strategies and national *integrated* river basin management plans for discussion at the 13th Tisza Group Meeting / Project workshop (September 2009).
- **Preparation of transboundary Integrated River Basin Management Plan,** Based on the outcome of the 13th Tisza Group Meeting / Project workshop the PIU with support from national experts will draft a transboundary integration strategy and an integrated river basin management plan. These will be submitted to the 14th and 15th Tisza Group meeting for discussion and finalisation.

4.2 Component 2

This component links closely to the work undertaken by the UNDP co-funded project and will provide an important input to Component 1 activities. The following key activities are planned under component 2.

- **Preparation of a short-list of potential demonstration projects and locations.** Following the Inception Meeting, UNDP together with the PIU have prepared a ‘Call for Proposals’ (see Annex 4) seeking project ideas from a wide range of stakeholders within the Tisza basin. The call explains the objectives for the demonstration projects and the expected criteria for a successful project proposal. The Inception Meeting recognised the limited budget available and the short time-scale for undertaking the demonstration projects and this assisted in focusing the selection criteria. A short-list of potential projects will be submitted to the 11th Tisza Group Meeting / Project workshop (September 2008) for discussion and

approval. UNDP will support the recommended short-listed project concepts develop more detailed proposals.

- **Stakeholder workshop.** UNDP will organise a stakeholder workshop (November 2008) to enable the detailed proposals for the demonstration projects to be presented and discussed. Following this workshop (and incorporating any comments received) the demonstration project proposals will be presented to the full PSC (December 2008) for formal approval.
- **Implementation of demonstration projects.** It is expected that the demonstration projects will be launched in early 2009 with an expected completion within 18 months. The demonstration projects will participate and report to the Tisza Group Meetings/ Project workshops and to keep national representatives of the Tisza Group briefed on progress. The demonstration projects will also be required to submit periodic reports to the PIU and will be subjected to an evaluation by a regional expert on wetlands/floodplains.
- **Final Stakeholder workshop.** UNDP will organise a final stakeholder workshop (anticipated in 2010/2011) to enable the results of the demonstration projects and the lessons learnt to be disseminated within the basin. This workshop will also be an opportunity to identify the key messages to be presented to audiences outside the basin and to demonstrate to national policy makers the benefits of the approaches undertaken. The workshop will also enable the integrated river basin management plan (Component 1) to be presented and the links between the two main project components highlighted.

4.3 Dissemination

4.3.1 Web

A UNDP/GEF Tisza MSP website has been created within the ICPDR web. The address is <http://www.icpdr.org/undp-gef-tisza>.

4.3.2 Development of replication strategy

The PIU will be responsible for developing a replication strategy for the lessons learnt (on both the development of an integrated management plan and on the demonstration projects) that can be applied elsewhere in the Danube River Basin and more generally outside the region.

4.4 Planned Workshops

Back to back with the ICPDR Tisza Group meetings. Will be specified at least 6 months before the event. 1st workshop will be organised in the frame of the 11th Tisza Group meeting (23-24 Septembr, 2008 Kosice (SK).

4.5 Consultant support

Outline tasks and budgets for National Experts were included in the report of the Inception Meeting (see Annex2). These outlines were used to prepare full ToRs for the National Experts covering both components. National consultants will be selected based on a response to these ToRs with the full support of the Tisza MSP nominated national contacts.



5 Annexes

- Annex 1** Project Document
- Annex 2** Inception Meeting Report
- Annex 3** Terms of Reference for PIU
- Annex 4** Call for Proposals for demonstration projects
- Annex 5** UNDP/GEF Tisza MSP M&E Plan
- Annex 6** Timetable (Timeplan)