

Caspian Environment Programme

Meeting to Exchange Experience with Other International Waters Programmes: Moscow 15th & 16th November 1999

Draft Summary of Discussions

1. Objectives

The purpose of the workshop was to introduce important stakeholders in the Caspian region to the experiences of other International Waters programmes/conventions in the European-West Asian region, to allow exchanges of views and experiences. The objective was to strengthen the Caspian countries' capacity to drive and direct the development of the CEP and develop the logical extension of the CEP to more long-term regional environmental management structures.

2. Venue and Date

The workshop was held in the Belgrad Hotel, Moscow on 15-16 November 1999.

3. Participants

A list of participants is appended.

Participants included National Focal Points of the 5 Caspian states, leaders of CRTCs and representatives from each of the following regional organisations

- Mediterranean Action Plan: MAP
- Regional Organisation for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden: PERSGAR
- Helsinki Commission (Baltic Sea): HELCOM
- Oslo and Paris Commission (North-East Atlantic): OSPAR

International financing agencies supporting the CEP attended as observers, including representatives of Tacis, UNEP, and World Bank.

4. Agenda

<i>15th November : Moderator: S Tveritinov</i>		
9:00	Welcome to participants	S Tveritinov
9:30	Brief self-introduction by each participant	
9:45	Review of progress of the CEP	Stuart Gunn
10:15	Agreements, Establishment of Institutions and their Structure and the Regional and National Obligations of the Parties. Brief review of the subject.	each representative of the established International Waters Programmes/ Commissions.
	Discussion following each presentation	
13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:00	Continued discussion on Institutional Structure	
15:00	Exchange of Data/Information and Setting of Standards Brief review of the subject	each representative of the established International Waters Programmes/ Commissions
	Discussion following each presentation	
17:30	<i>Close</i>	

<i>16th November: Moderator Dr A Amirkhanov</i>		
9:00	Mechanisms of Financing the Work of the Programmes/Commissions Brief review of the subject	each representative of the established International Waters Programmes/ Commissions.
	Discussion following each presentation	
13:00	<i>lunch</i>	
14:00	Achievements of the Programmes and Proposals to Extend those Achievements	each representative of the established International Waters Programmes/ Commissions.
15:30	Discussion following each presentation	
16:30	Wrap-up	Dr A Amirkhanov/S Gunn

5. Summary of Discussion

The meeting agreed that the following represents an overview of the main points discussed and the various modalities followed by other international waters programmes/commissions.

Further detailed information on the operation of the international waters programmes can be obtained from their home pages, as follows:

- PERSGA:
- OSPAR: <http://www.ospar.org/>
- MEDPOL:
- HELCOM: <http://www.helcom.fi/>
- CEP: <http://www.az.cep/>

5.1. Agreements, Institutions, and Obligations

- The agreements/conventions to which the parties have signed are political in nature with variations in the extent to which they are legally binding on the parties.
- The institutions set up under the conventions vary from a minimal establishment of a Secretariat, to a Secretariat plus several institutions concerned with particular themes. Where thematic institutions are not established, then the detailed work is carried out through working group meetings.
- Two main models of management are:
 - central or common management of all activities;
 - management of core activities by the Secretariat, and management of thematic activities by individual countries or organisations.

Details of the management and lines of communication between the Secretariat and thematic units were not discussed in detail.

5.2. Information Exchange and Standards Setting

- Principally, the Secretariat only requires information. However, in certain cases, especially before the capabilities of the information providers have been further developed, raw data may be received and processed by the Secretariat, but there is a need to move towards managing information rather than data, to avoid being overloaded.
- Ambient quality of coastal waters is in general defined in terms of targets rather than current obligatory standards. Time frames for targets are often quite long, and staged achievement is defined. Effluent water qualities are often compulsory within the agreements, and are designed to achieve the ambient water quality targets.
- Data/information sources are sometimes arranged through an official national government representative, to ensure government approval of the information. As

confidence in the performance of the Secretariat or its organs grows, a wider range of information sources is acceptable.

- All organisations stated that all information and processed data collected is widely available to the public. In the MAP only a statement of the use to which information will be put is required.
- The institutions of the Conventions are often involved in verification of the information provided, but that depends on the state of development of the countries and organisations providing information. Assistance/verification can be in terms of capacity building or establishment of reference laboratories or calibration teams.
- It was stressed that in collecting information/data, the requirements be carefully defined as those requirements for environmental management, rather than research.

5.3. Financing

- The Conventions/Secretariats only finance studies, meetings, information exchange, and other direct work of the Secretariat and other organs. The actual work of environmental management/improvement, such as construction of effluent treatment plants or establishment of national monitoring services are not financed by the Commissions themselves.
- Within the organisations represented, there were no examples of regional environmental taxation systems.
- Some Conventions have grown out of direct political agreement between countries, and in some cases these agreements have been derived with the assistance of external intervention by UNEP and other international organisations. In such cases, the initial external assistance (project) phase is always designed such that it leads to a long-term and sustainable phase that will be directly financed by the region itself.
- The formulae for deciding shares of financing by each country usually depend on the Gross National Product, as determined by the UN. In one case (HELCOM) each country should pay an equal share.
- Apart from the 'Core' funding of the operations of the Secretariat and other organs of the Conventions, the required 'actions' are not generally funded by the Conventions or Secretariats. Direct actions to manage or improve the environment such as regular ambient and emission monitoring and waste water treatment plants are funded by the countries. Often loans or grants from external organisations independently assist such actions, although the Commission/Programme may assist in coordinating the assistance.

5.4. Achievements and Lessons Learnt

- Real environmental improvements have definitely been achieved by regional seas programmes or conventions, although it is sometimes difficult to identify which environmental improvements can be directly attributed to the Programme/Convention, and which are results of other interventions.
- Environmental improvements often take time, and patience is necessary to realise good results.
- It is important to set priorities:
 - to ensure targets are within the capacities of the institutions;
 - to ensure that activities match the SAP targets.
- Capacity building is in many regions an essential part of the development of the Convention and its effective organs:
 - multi-faceted, including finance and management, not just scientific topics;
 - to make the best use of the human resources that are always available in-region.

6. Wrap-up

The meeting was summarised and next steps for the Caspian Environment Programme were recommended, including the following points:

- A long-term overall work programme for the Caspian Environment Programme and agreement on detailed arrangements for lines of communication (especially between PCU, NFP, and CRTCs) are urgently required.
- A working group of representatives of the 5 countries should gather as soon as practical to prepare recommendations to the Steering Committee on the overall work programme and communications arrangements.
- The Steering Committee should convene to discuss the recommendations as soon as practical after receiving the recommendations of the working group, but providing sufficient time to consider the recommendations prior to the meeting.