

## **Cover Note for Workshop Delegates**

Dear delegate,

In the current stage of the WFD implementation process, the European workshop on Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWB) (12-13 March 2009, Brussels) aims to allow European information exchange on the following topics:

- **Designation of HMWB:** Exchange of experiences on practical application of HMWB designation processes in the Member States.
- **Establishing Good Ecological Potential (GEP):** Exchange experiences with the practical application of different approaches for deriving GEP, including both the HMWB Guidance No 4 approach based on biological quality elements and the "Prague" approach based on mitigation measures.  
The EC argued whether the alternative "Prague" approach for defining GEP is WFD compatible. For this reason, it is of interest to discuss at the workshop whether applying the two approaches leads to comparable results.
- **Objective setting and measures:** Discuss experiences of Member States on objective setting for HMWB, including the application of exemptions, and exchange information about planned mitigation measures.

On Day 1 of the workshop, 3 parallel working groups will take place on "Hydropower", "Navigation & ports" and "Agriculture & flood defence" (for details see programme at <http://www.ecologic-events.de/hmwb/programme.htm>). Each working group will discuss from a use-focused perspective the main topics of the workshop, i.e. HMWB designation, GEP establishment, objectives setting and measures. Stakeholders will also contribute statements relevant to the topics of the workshop in each working group.

On Day 2 of the workshop, summaries of the working group discussions will be reported and discussed in the plenary room.

The Discussion Paper (see <http://www.ecologic-events.de/hmwb/background.htm>) gives you background information and a summary of MS questionnaire replies on the topics that we will be discussing in the working groups. We hope you will find this information useful in preparing your contributions to the discussions.

### **Organisation of working groups**

At the registration desk, you will be asked to sign up for one of the following working groups:

- WG I: Hydropower
- WG II: Navigation & ports
- WG III: Agriculture & flood defence

In the working groups, each topic (HMWB designation; GEP establishment; objectives setting and measures) will be introduced by an impulse statement/presentation by a Member State delegate.

Following the impulse statements, the group chair will invite in a *tour de table* the other delegates to briefly share their views and experience on each topic.

To facilitate these discussions, the organisers would like to invite delegates to prepare themselves for the workshop by considering the following questions:

### ***HMWB designation***

- How has the extent of HMWB changed from the provisional identification step to the designation step? How are changes explained? To what extent have the two steps been differentiated and treated separately?
- Which water uses are mainly considered for HMWB designation? What is included in "other equally important sustainable human development activities"?
- Which criteria and thresholds are used to assess the "scale of modification"? What are the main hydromorphological conditions identified for the ecological continuum (e.g. conditions for fish migration upstream and downstream of dams and reservoirs)?
- How are "significant adverse effects on use or the wider environment" defined in practice (criteria and thresholds)? What is the view of stakeholders on the definitions of "significant adverse effects" used by the MS? Could harmonized/comparable European criteria be developed for certain uses?
- What are the main "significantly better environmental options" considered (criteria and thresholds)?

### ***Definition of Good Ecological Potential (GEP)***

- What kind of practical approaches have been used to define reference conditions for HMWB (MEP) and set class boundaries for biological quality elements when using the method for classifying ecological potential laid down in CIS guidance No 4?
- Have special biological assessment methods been developed and used for classifying ecological potential? Has it been possible in practice to derive biological reference values and class boundaries from the closest comparable types?
- What kind of practical approaches have been used to define checklists of mitigation measures for GEP and then apply them according to the Prague method to classify ecological potential? How have water bodies been checked to determine if the mitigation

measures used to define GEP are in place? Has it been possible to translate the expected biological effects of the mitigation measures into ecological reference values?

- How do the results of using the two approaches for GEP definition compare? Are the mitigation measures needed to achieve GEP comparable? Are there any examples to combine both methods?
- How many classes for HMWB are used by the MS? Is it possible to intercalibrate similar HMWB between countries? How does the European intercalibration exercise for reservoirs correlate with GEP definition via the Prague approach?
- How is information from stakeholders incorporated (or can be incorporated) into the process of classification of ecological potential?

### ***Objective setting & measures***

- Which ways of setting objectives did Member States use for HMWB? Would exemptions under Art. 4 (5) (less stringent objectives) be consistent with HMWB designation according to Art. 4 (3) and CIS guidance No 4?
- Is it possible to define a list of ecologically efficient measures for all HMWB uses mentioned in Art. 4 (3) WFD?
- What criteria of ecological functionality are used for measures (e.g. in order to ensure continuity with fish ladders)?

We look forward to meeting you and hearing your view and contributions in Brussels,

*The workshop organisers*