International Waters: Learning Exchange and
Resource Network (IW:LEARN)

GEF IW Experience Notes Format

(please submit to info@iwlearn.org)

The GEF's *International Waters Experience Notes* help the transboundary water management (TWM) community share its practical experiences to promote better TWM. **Experiences** include successful practices, approaches, strategies, lessons, methodologies, etc., that emerge in the context of TWM. Completed forms may be 3-7 pages long, and serve as the basis for *Notes* disseminated via GEF IW:LEARN and its iwlearn.net Web site.

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1. TITLE – How to manage IW projects, ecosystems restoration

2. PROJECT TITLE – *What is the title of the project from which the experience is derived? (Include the project's unique Implementing Agency code and/or GEF ID, if applicable.)*

UNDP-GEF Kura II Project: Advancing IWRM across the Kura River Basin Project Summary

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION - *Briefly summarize the project's objectives, expected outcomes and timeframe (from Project Document or elsewhere). If experience pertains to a specific project activity, please describe that activity as well.*

The Project outputs are follows:

1. Institutional strengthening and updating for improved, sustainable IWRM
2. Capacity building for professional water managers across multiple sectors,
3. Demonstrating applied solutions to improve water management in critical areas, through stress reduction in critical areas and pre-feasibility studies to identify investment opportunities for improving river system health
4. Increasing stakeholder awareness, education and empowerment through targeted education and involvement projects to empower stakeholders in implementing local / national / regional actions in support of SAP implementation
5. Improving the use of science for governance by strengthening monitoring, information management and data analysis systems for IWRM

4. DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE(S), CHALLENGE(S) AND EXPERIENCE - *Provide a concise description of (a) the transboundary waters management issue[s] this experience addressed and (b) how the issue(s) were addressed through specific actions by the project.*

The Kura project team shared valuable experience on:
- communication with beneficiaries (Regional Coordinator - located in Baku - visits Tbilisi monthly), public ('better inform more people than less'), within the team (weekly one-hour long skype conferences),
- division of functions within a team (no overlapping),
- periodic learning (e.g. leadership, time management),
- development of the project proposal to implement SAP (start 6-12 months before the project end),

- hydropower and ecosystems nexus (the hydropower impacts to the environment, growing water needs),
- donors' coordination (there are no official mechanism but communicate regularly with the few projects in Azerbaijan and Georgia).

It was particularly valuable to learn about Kura projects' ecosystems restoration plan. The project is to perform ecosystem restoration in the Kura basin (the Dniester team visited a site), a waterbody / lake which used to be connected with / feed by the Kura river. The project team invested quite a bit of thinking on a pilot area and selected the lake 60 km away from Baku. The project beneficiaries agreed with the project teams' selection, and the project hired an international consultant on rivers restoration. Currently planning for the restoration is being performed.

5. RESULTS AND LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE - *Summarize the impacts of this experience on the issues, the project and its partners. What was learned from this experience?*

Lessons learned:
- time management and leadership capacity building training would be beneficial to the project team members,
- it is better to overinform than to underinform (ref. external and internal communication) communication,
- first mass involvement of public should happen at the stage of impacts and pressures assessment,
- the Dniester project can learn from the Kura project on ecosystem restoration,
- the Kura project is interested in the work on hydropower in the Dniester,
- preparation of a project proposal for the SAP implementation should start approx. 6-12 months before the project end.

6. REPLICATION - *What implementation challenges should others expect to encounter when replicating this experience? Highlight specific conditions needed for others to replicate or benefit from this experience.*

N/a

7. SIGNIFICANCE - *Why is this experience significant to GEF and to transboundary water resources management?*

It is very valuable to meet other project's team who has already gone the TDA / SAP and which can share the loopholes on various issues, provide insights for work flow and distribution of functions within a team. Discussions on similar activities (wetlands restoration, hydropower) are beneficial to both sides as these are the significant undertaking and they should be planned as thoroughly as possible.

8. REFERENCES - *How can someone interested in using or adapting this experience get more information? Please provide relevant Web site(s), documentation and contact information.*

Please see www.dniester-basin.org and http://kura-river.blogspot.com

9. KEYWORDS - *What 2-5 keywords could be used to help others search and find this experience note?*

Project inception, work flow lifehacks, rivers restoration, hydropower

Examples of IW Experiences

Process

- Development and tracking of indicators transboundary systems
- Knowledge management database and IT for TWM
- Financing mechanisms for TWM
- Public/private partnerships in TWM

Participation

- National/regional/local participation
- Leveraging of local funds (public and private)
- NGO participation
- Workshops, training and education programs
- Public relations/outreach/visibility

Performance

- TDA/SAP approval
- NAP development and approval
- Regulatory development and enforcement
- Engineering/investment project completion
- Measurable environmental improvement
- Public private partnerships & market based mechanisms
- Applied scientific research
- Water quality monitoring program implementation
- Species, habitat and ecosystem protection/rehabilitation
- Sustainability issues (post-GEF investment)

Technical

- Wetland restoration practices
- Optimization of wetlands as nutrient sinks
- Primary and secondary wastewater treatment
- Tertiary wastewater treatment
- Cleaner industrial production
- Nutrient management in Agricultural practices

M&E Process Indicators

- Establishment of country-specific inter-ministerial committees
- Completion of a country endorsed TDA
- Documentation of stakeholder involvement in stakeholder involvement plan
- Completion of a country-endorsed SAP
- High-level political commitment to follow up joint actions
- Adoption of a science advisory panel
- Adoption of an M&E plan

M&E Stress Reduction Indicators

- Point source pollution reduction
- Non-point source pollution programs implemented
- Coastal zone or wetlands placed into protection
- Reduced releases of pollution to groundwater recharge zones

M&E Environmental Status Indicators

- Improved (measurable) ecological or biological indices
- Improved (measurable) chemical, physical (including flow regimes), or biological parameters
- Demonstrable reduction of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the food chain

Other Areas

- Pollution and water use tariffs
- Economic instruments for water resources management (taxes, tradeable permits, etc.)
- Economic valuation of water-related environmental assets
- Sustainable fisheries management
- Structuring and operation of transboundary waters institutions