

Report on consultation meetings with rural authorities in Moldova on implementation of the GWP funded project “Integrated Drought management Programme in Central and Eastern Europe”

(act. 5.6)

1. General Data

Country:	Moldova
Organizer:	GWP Moldova, Dumitru Drumea
Date & Place:	June-July 2014 in northern (Ciulucani community, Telenasti region), central (Loganesti community, Hincesti region), southern (Cahul town, Cahul region) and Dubasari (Transnistria region) parts of Moldova

Actual report is based on the results of consultation meetings with local rural authorities in Moldova performed in the frame of the activity 5.6 under “Integrated Drought Management” project, which is implemented in Moldova by GWP Moldova in cooperation with the Soil Research Institute, Agricultural University of Moldova and Institute of Ecology and Geography. Consultation meetings were organized in the period June-July 2014 in northern (Ciulucani community, Telenasti region), central (Loganesti community, Hincesti region), southern (Cahul town, Cahul region) and Dubasari (Transnistria region) parts of Moldova. Invited participants presented relevant stakeholders from mentioned regions. Total number of involved participants was around 100 people (Lists of participants attached). Main stakeholders involved in the consultation meetings:

- Mayors of the communities
- Farmers associations
- Agricultural authorities
- Local Councils
- Civil society
- Environmental authorities (local environmental Inspectorates)
- Researchers and students

2. Agenda

Main objective:

to identify priorities and options for the adaptation of actual practices for rural development in regard to the climate change issues in the region and present options for management of the droughts in order to reduce impacts of these events on agricultural activities.

Agenda of the consultation events was developed according to the content of the activity 5.6 and preliminary consultations with stakeholders during national dialog event on 23 December 2013 (agenda attached).

Main points of discussion:

Agroclimatic zonation of the territory of Moldova was presented during local events together with the practices on drought management issues existed in the country in different reports developed by GWP Moldova, different projects implemented in the country by different institutions. In this context the role of local authorities, activities, projects needed for adaptation to the climate change in the region were discussed together with main goals,

objectives, activities etc., necessary for successful implementation of the climate change adaptation strategy.

During previous meetings organized by GWP Moldova with regional authorities in the frame of national dialogs, different stakeholders confirmed necessity in development of the planning documents aimed at adaptation measures to climate change and especially drought management activities. The results of the national dialog (23 December 2013) also showed significant necessity in development of measures aimed at development of the planning drought management. Such program could also serve as a tool for further cooperation in the Danube region (Danube Strategy etc), where Moldova and Ukraine cooperate in different domains.

3. Report

On the base of discussions during consultation meetings in **rural communities and local authorities identified next issues in the drought management activities, which could be relevant to the reduction of impacts of droughts on rural and agricultural development:**

- Attraction of best EU practices on moisture conservation under different agricultural crops, especially for multiannual plantations. Cooperation with relevant authorities from EU countries on local level for common management of droughts in order to implement best practices in to mitigate climate change impact on social and economic development in rural communities and farming activities.
- Development of drought management adaptation planning practices in agriculture and other sectors of rural economy to possible climate change in the region based on the results of the studies performed in the Dnester region.
- Further development of local infrastructure, which could contribute to moisture conservation: green carcasses, green agriculture, small irrigation including the use for these purposes sewer waters from the network in localities, etc.) and fertility of soils in the region.
- Educational issues, including publishing of the guide, map of agroclimate zoning, etc. and its presentation to different level of authorities and target groups of population. Special attention was given to the opportunities for erosion reduction as a significant tool for moisture conservation, especially in the southern part of the country.

Local authorities also mentioned necessity of the development of the irrigation system with irrigation norm of 1500-2500 m³ of water per year/ha. (Soviet era irrigation norm was around 7000-7500 m³/ha). For these purposes they also outlined opportunities for the use of water resources of small rivers and theirs' restoration.

Based on the discussions and results of the small groups an **integrated situation in the region in regard to drought management and reducing of potential risks associated with the climate change could be summarized:**

- Include drought management issues in local agendas for social and economic development. According to the opinions of rural authorities it should be based on cooperation and opportunities, which arise in implementation of the Association Agreement Moldova-EU and preparing of relevant projects according to the planned local agenda approved by local Councils.
- Development of relevant water infrastructure to overcome water scarcity and improve water quality of small rivers and lakes in rural communities including development of opportunities for extension of the network of restored wetlands as a tool for improvement of the hydrological regime of local water sources.
- Development of the small irrigation based on underground, small rivers, waste water, etc. resources.

In the frame of discussions **main activities needed for mitigation of climate change and droughts were proposed by participants.** According to the opinion of rural authorities an economic analysis together with evaluation of the potential impact of droughts should be developed. Discussions showed that **local authorities need information on next issues:**

- rural planning and case-studies on moisture conservation practices from EU countries, especially from those located in similar natural conditions,

- existed resources in the Dniester basin for development of irrigation system and proposals for their rational use for development of different agricultural trades,
- sharing of institutional responsibilities in the region and identification of activities from local Councils needed for the drought management,
- modalities of involvement of relevant stakeholders in mitigation of climate change and drought management for implementation of the adaptation measures (projects files for agricultural development),
- economic analysis for development of certain agricultural activities in the Dniester region and cooperation with neighboring countries in implementation of joint drought management projects and measures.

Rural local authorities involved in regional consultation process also expressed a strong commitment for cooperation with international organizations like GWP, INBO, etc. involved in water resources management and adaptation to the climate change. In this context they were also informed on the Danube climate change study, Danube Strategy, activities for river basin management developed in Moldova under International Commission for Cooperation for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and main provisions of the Danube river basin management plan prepared by all Danube countries including Moldova. According to the procedures of the Danube Strategy and other neighboring programmes of EU all territory of Moldova is included for development of different projects including those for the Danube region.

Main problems, objectives and activities needed for development and implementation of the GWP Drought management program in the Moldavian part of the Dniester river basin.

On the base of the discussions with local and sectoral authorities main problems associated with the implementation of the GWP funded project on “Drought management program” in the Moldavian part of the Dniester river basin were identified:

Problem 1. Poor institutional and technical capacities of local authorities and communities, lack of experience in development and implementation of drought management and mitigation activities

For the resolving of mentioned problem next objectives were identified by local rural authorities during the consultation workshops:

Objective 1.1. Information on best practices and case-studies on drought mitigation and management activities presented in the region.

Activities needed for achieving of the objective 1.1:

- Activity 1: Launching of the informational activities on the drought management practices and case-studies. This could be organized near agricultural committees created in the frame of local Councils and colleges, local environmental inspectorates, etc. Soil Research Institute should support implementation of the best practices on drought management and mitigation in cooperation with GWP Moldova, Agricultural University, etc.
- Activity 2: Organizing of public events on presentation of the measures aimed at drought management and mitigation in different sectors of rural development. Public hearings on management plans for extension of the water infrastructure network the Dniester river basin with involvement of NGOs, citizens, experts, sectoral Ministry, etc.
- Activity 3: Summarising of the results of different projects developed in Moldova on drought and climate change in order to identify possible activities, which could be relevant to drought management and rural development in the Dniester river basin and preparing of relevant case-studies.

Objective 1.2. Institutional arrangements on local level developed together with the planning documents needed for implementation of the drought management activities and projects

- Activity 1: Preparing of the list of necessary documents and relevant decisions, their approval by local authorities on the regional level for the implementation as part of development of local agendas on drought management and climate change adaptation.

- Activity 2: Presentation of drought management practices, relevant projects and case-studies to local councils and rural stakeholders in the Moldavian part of the Dniester river basin with invitation of the representatives of NGOs and public institutions.
- Activity 3: Preparing of the local councils decisions on implementation of the provisions of the drought management plans and action program for theirs' implementation. Strengthening of cooperation activities with potential donors and attraction of investment to the region, preparing and presentation of investment portfolio on drought management with presentation of relevant documents to potential stakeholders
- Activity 4: Development of Program of measures for implementation of the drought management activities on local level. According to local authorities this should be a document with estimation of costs, institutional responsibilities and identification of target period for each activity mentioned in the program of measures.
- Activity 5: Developing of project files needed for implementation of the drought management activities. Local authorities pledged for attraction of international expertise. They also stressed attention on such issues like promotion of regional cooperation and underlined necessity to develop projects, which could facilitate regional cooperation on drought management and mitigation.

Problem 2. *Economic constrains and insufficient drought management practices in the Moldavian part of the Dniester river basin in Moldova to mitigate consequences of extreme weather events (droughts).*

For the problem 2 next objectives were identified:

Objective 2.1. Institutional and legal frameworks on local level for the implementation of the drought management activities in the Dniester river basin in Moldova developed.

Activities for the achieving of the objective 2.1

- Activity 1: Analysis of actual institutional responsibilities of local institutions, which could be involved in the drought management activities on local level.
- Activity 2: Estimation of financial needs for implementation of the drought management activities, which could be included in local plans for social and economic development. Participants also underlined that financial constrains in Moldova could be very severe and budgets available from local councils will not be able to cover relevant expenses. Participants also pledged for international cooperation in this domain and appreciated very much contribution of the GWP funded project and other relevant activities in order to strengthen capacities of local agencies to implement best practices on drought management and climate change adaptation in the Dniester region.
- Activity 3: Estimation of opportunities for development of organic farming. According to the opinion of local authorities there are favourable conditions for development of such sector of agriculture in the region. According to their estimations around 30% of agricultural lands could be used for this purpose. It could create new jobs (around 1000) and increase income of local population for 30-40%. Main obstacle – poor infrastructure, including irrigation system, insufficient cooperation among different stakeholders including regional cooperation etc.
- Activity 4. Identification of investment portfolio for drought management program implementation. Under this activity local authorities proposed to prepare list of priority measures and to include it in the local social and economic activities in local and regional plans.

Objective 2. 2. Regional and international cooperation on the drought management in the Moldavian part of the Dniester river basin strengthened.

- Activity 1. Organizing of joint meetings of relevant stakeholders with invitation of relevant authorities from neighbouring countries for preparing of joint agendas on drought management and allocation of relevant financial resources.

- Activity 2. Development of tools and mechanisms for attraction of best practices on moisture conservation under different agricultural crops. Rural authorities told on creation of financial mechanisms like taxation etc. for farmers and authorities, who implement best drought adaptation measures.
- Activity 3. Cooperation with GWP CEE on attraction of best case-studies, practices etc. on drought management and sustainable use of water resources in the Dnester river basin. Rural authorities also asked GWP Moldova to moderate presentation of best practices on moisture conservation applied in EU to Moldova. In this context the importance of signing and ratification of the Association Agreement EU-Moldova was underlined as an opportunity for Moldavian (also Ukrainian) authorities to participate in different EU supported projects, programmes etc.

On the base of discussions during the consultation meetings participants identified main activities, which could contribute to the development and implementation of the drought management program in the Dnester river basin.

1. Reconstruction of the irrigation systems based on the irrigation norms till 2000-2500 m³ of water per year per ha.
2. Preparing of the drought management plans and implementation of the soil moisture conservation practices. Including of the activities on drought management in local plans for rural, social and economic development
3. Reducing soil erosion and construction of the green protected belts on agricultural lands as a tool for moisture conservation and atmospheric precipitation harvesting.
4. To exclude agricultural activities at least on the 50% of the wetland areas in the flood plains of the river and use these areas as a water retention ones in case of floods and improvement of the hydrological regime.
5. Educational activities on drought management and climate change to include in the curriculums of the agricultural University as well as creation of the info centres on best practices on drought management and relevant case-studies. Universities should also participate in the research and educational activities developed in EU through different programs and opportunities arising from Association Agreement EU-Moldova. The network of the Black sea and Danube Universities seems to be the most relevant for such purposes.
6. Extension of the water infrastructure in order to improve the comfort of life of local population due to the climate change and irrigation needs for farming. Actually this issue is one of the most acute in the region.

4. Conclusions

1. There is a strong understanding in the region that climate change issues affect social and economic development in the region. Recently developed national strategy on climate change also covers drought management issues, but specific activities needed for implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures should be presented in local agendas for social and economic development. This should also include specific projects (activities) and program of measures for implementation of these plans. Planning should be developed on the base of the project files, investment portfolio etc. and presented to relevant stakeholders, business community, national and international donors.

2. Economic instruments as well as financial capacities of local authorities to implement drought management activities are rather insufficient and need strong enforcement in order to implement provisions of the program. Institutional capacities are also poor developed and clear responsibilities should be identified. Cooperation instruments in order to attract investments to the drought management and mitigation should also be improved. Investment program and program of measures for these purposes should be developed.

3. Development of infrastructure to reduce drought management on social and economic development is also a

concern of local authorities in terms of agricultural activities. Actual irrigation practices are often based on the water sources with a bad quality, especially in the southern part of the country and measures aimed at improvement of water quality, especially in small rivers should be developed.

4. GWP could play a facilitation role in attraction of best practices and case-studies on soil moisture conservation, preparing of relevant guides, development of educational programs and facilitate regional cooperation on drought management in the Dniester river basin.

How does this workshop contribute to the objectives and outputs of the 5.6 demonstration project?

5. Attachments

- photos
- presentation
- list of participants