

**PIANC WFD/NAVIGATION SEMINAR – BRUSSELS, 31 JANUARY 2007**  
**RAPPORTEUR REPORT FOR WORKSHOP III: DELIVERING WFD-**  
**COMPLIANT HYDROMORPHOLOGICAL CHANGE**

Workshop III was well attended with several organisations making statements. Phillip Weller, ICPDR outlined the experience in the Danube RBD – the largest in the EU. Hydromorphology was identified in the Article 5 analysis as one of the key reasons for waters failing to meet WFD objectives. Hydropower, navigation and flood risk management were the main causes of hydromorphological pressure. Bed stabilisation and dredging are activities within the navigation pressure category that risk impacting on ecological status.

Jan Brooke, PIANC outlined the importance of marine navigation to EU trade, the importance of understanding the natural system that seaports operate in including their sediment regime, the recent work in the CIS on wfd/hydromorphology (policy integration and technical case studies including that of defining Good Ecological Potential through mitigation measures) and the designation of Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWBs). Jan also outlined the recently agreed Article 4.7 CIS Guidance and the lessons to be learned from the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directive.

Hendrik Havinga, Rijkswaterstaat, Netherlands presented some of the practical challenges in delivering hydromorphological improvements including the direct (mechanical) and indirect effects on aquatic ecology. There was a debate as to whether to focus on mitigation in the bank/flood plain areas of navigation channels rather than the channel itself (the latter having the potential for greatest adverse affect on the specified use). There were questions as to who pays for mitigation measures, how to handle the different administrative arrangements for floods and navigation in member states, the importance of recognising the dynamic nature of aquatic systems, and the importance of R&D.

Stakeholder Statements were made by the Hamburg Port Authority, CEDA, Port of Le Havre, CCNR, Environment Agency for England and Wales (UK), British Waterways, German Federal Institute for Hydrology, Port Authority for New York and New Jersey, Delft Hydraulics, and PIANC.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop was suggested by CCNR/ICPR on the topic of best practice for developing inland navigation in 2007/8. CEDA suggested the possibility of an annual forum on the issue of WFD/navigation.

In the discussion that followed, it was recognised that much is happening within member states already in terms of linking navigation to sustainable water management and much 'best practice' is already out there on which to build for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the WFD. Continued dialogue between the navigation sector and water managers was needed if successful integration between EU transport and water policy was to be achieved.

There was wide recognition of the uncertainties that competent authorities and the navigation sector face in understanding the ecological impact of hydromorphological pressures caused by the navigation sector (and other sectors causing hydromorphological pressures). What was the ability of member states to monitor for and measure ecological improvements from any restoration or mitigation measures that were put in place? There was a need for further research and development in this area including the consideration of climate change. Added to these uncertainties it was often the case that ecological improvements would take time once measures were enacted. However, many pointed for the need to take action despite these uncertainties, particularly if 'win-win' schemes or 'no regrets' solutions could be identified through the river basin planning process. An iterative process could be envisaged with the evidence to justify action being built up through successive river basin planning cycles.

The need for commonality of approach in designating navigation related HMWBs and defining Good Ecological Potential (GEP) between member states was emphasised. The work within the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) was useful in this regard, for example in agreeing an alternative approach to defining GEP through mitigation measures. The good practice case studies in the technical guidance were a useful starting point that practitioners could draw on. The policy integration paper was also useful in stressing the need for dialogue between the navigation and water policy makers at an early stage so minimising potential conflicts. There was an urgent need to WFD proof policies, programmes, plans and projects. The CIS Article 4.7 Guidance was relevant here.

The consideration of navigation and its impact on a naturally dynamic aquatic system was emphasised strongly, particularly the role of sediment and its management. Sediments should not automatically be seen as a problem – rather part of the natural system. Dredging, if done sensitively, can be used as a management tool to improve environmental quality eg. in habitat creation or the removal of contaminated sediment. Questions were raised over how best to deal with historic modifications and legacy issues – who should pay in these situations, particularly as the current operator in many cases had not caused the problem?

Finally, there was a consensus on the need to communicate best practice in a user friendly and accessible manner. PIANC offered to facilitate a follow-up workshop perhaps on HMWB designation and defining GEP.