



6. Bulgarian Strategy for Management and Development of Hydro-melioration and Protection Against Harmful Effects of Water – Implementation Issues

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Strengthening of master curricula in water resources
management for the Western Balkans HEIs and stakeholders

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1. Strategy development

- **Common Strategy for Management and Development of Hydro-melioration and Protection Against Harmful Effects of Water**
 - Contract between Bulgarian Government and the World Bank (2015)
- The Strategy has the following collateral documents:
 - Baseline Assessment Report,
 - Report on Programming and Prioritization Framework,
 - Report on Legal Review
 - Report on Capacity Development
 - Action Plans for Irrigation Associations and Municipalities



1. Strategy Development

- The key elements of the strategy are:
 - - carrying out legal and institutional reforms
 - - introduction of a new pricing policy for irrigation water
 - - restoration and modernization of the irrigation and drainage infrastructure
 - - paying attention to higher education and vocational training in the field of land reclamation engineering, design and construction.



1. Strategy Development

- Institutionally, the changes are mainly expressed in the restructuring of Irrigation Systems EAD:
 - - initially in several regional autonomous hydro-amelioration enterprises with their own structure and budget to be responsible for the operation, maintenance and management of the hydro-ameliorative infrastructure (with budget financing, own revenues from water sales to associations and other water users)
 - - In the second stage, these enterprises will be transformed into self-financing, independent, decentralized organizations, and in the long run they will include municipalities and their infrastructure.



1. Strategy Development

- The legal reform aims to provide the necessary basis for institutional changes and the new organization of governance in the sector, to facilitate the establishment of irrigation associations and for other planned changes in the sector. It is envisaged:
 - - preparation of new legislation for the sector in the form of the Law on Hydromelioration
 - - amendment of the Law on Irrigation Associations and the relevant by-laws.



1. Strategy Development

- The proposed new pricing policy for irrigation and drainage water is based on the principle of cost recovery and is expressed in:
 - - introduction of a two-component tariff with two separate prices for irrigation - one is formed on the basis of cultivated area by each of the members of the irrigation associations, and the other - according to the actual quantities of water used for irrigation
 - - a separate price for drainage of agricultural land, which will be calculated on the basis of area.



1. Strategy Development

- An important role is assigned to the irrigation associations as the main actors in the sector, incl. as beneficiaries of EU funding.
- The issues of voluntary or obligatory membership in the associations of the owners of agricultural lands on their territory, for the provision of long-term support in their establishment, with training and in the creation of the necessary capacity are also addressed.



1. Strategy Development

- The strategy envisages investments for rehabilitation and modernization of the existing hydro-ameliorative infrastructure mainly under the Rural Development Program (RDP) 2014-2020 - measure 4, including:
 - - sub-measure 4.1 (strengthening the competitiveness of agricultural holdings)
 - - sub-measure 4.3 (support for investments in irrigation infrastructure in order to increase the efficiency of water use in agriculture).
- Investments should be made only through or in connection with Irrigation Associations.



1. Strategy Development

- To implement the strategy it is proposed:
 - - the establishment of a Management Committee for Hydromelioration and an Enforcement and Coordination Unit
 - - optimization of the Directorate for Hydromelioration, Investment Policy and Concessions in the Ministry of Agriculture
 - - Establishment of a National Center for Research and Training in Hydromelioration as a joint product of existing public organizations



2. Implementation Issues

- The new Unit for implementation and coordination of the strategy is envisaged for its implementation together with the Directorate for Hydromelioration, Investment Policy and Concessions in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. This unit will work for a decade as part of the MAF.
- It would be more appropriate and effective to restore the Executive Agency for Hydromelioration,



2. Implementation Issues

- The new Unit for implementation and coordination of the strategy is envisaged for its implementation together with the Directorate for Hydromelioration, Investment Policy and Concessions in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. This unit will work for a decade as part of the MAF.
- It would be more appropriate and effective to restore the Executive Agency for Hydromelioration,
 - It functioned a few years ago very well and effectively, with central management and regional units in several important areas for hydro-amelioration.
 - The Executive Agency will provide support and control of all activities carried out in the sector subsequently, incl. during operation and maintenance of the hydro-melioration systems



2. Implementation Issues

- With regard to the very important issue of restructuring Irrigation Systems EAD, we consider the proposal to transform them first into Regional state enterprises, relying almost entirely on the state budget, and at a later stage to restructure them into Regional self-financing ones. are, independent decentralized organizations.
- The issue of the ownership of the hydro-ameliorative facilities has not been clarified. It is written that the Regional Hydromelioration Enterprises will take over the public property, and the private commercial one, which is in the assets of Irrigation Systems EAD, includes many systems and facilities that are part of the hydro-ameliorative fund of the country.



2. Implementation Issues

- The change of Irrigation Systems EAD should also take place in stages, but with separation into independent self-financing units, first of all of those units, which have been found to have good management and good results.
- These branches of the Company are known
 - Plovdiv,
 - Pazardzhik,
 - Stara Zagora,
 - Sliven



2. Implementation Issues

- The privately constructed irrigation facilities in the country are also not considered,
 - The procedures for obtaining permits for water use / use of water bodies and the requirements for construction and operation of the facilities are subject to the same regulations.
 - Entirely private investment in hydro-ameliorative infrastructure is one of the serious future directions in the development of hydro-amelioration in Bulgaria.



2. Implementation Issues

- The issues of training specialists, conducting research and providing advice on hydromelioration also require more attention.
 - This applies both to the training and preparation of specialists who must manage and operate the hydro-ameliorative facilities, and to the specialists and members of the irrigation associations.
 - The problems in this area have been around for a long time and so far there is no real solution.



2. Implementation Issues

- After the urgent establishment (not done for 20 years) of the actual size and condition of irrigation and drainage facilities and those for flood protection in Bulgaria, GIS must be prepared and implemented, which will allow for a realistic assessment of the necessary for implementation of activities and financial resources for their restoration and development and for direct control over their implementation.