



Importance of bottom-up approach in water management - sustainable development of catchment areas in Croatia

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Association for preservation of Croatian waters and sea SLAP is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that gathers more than 150 scientist, hydrologist and civil engineers. SLAP has been established in 2006 and since then had organized many conferences and participated in projects dealing with water management. We have started our work developing plans to secure water supply to the 22 (21) villages in the rural parts of Dubrovnik (Pozega) area and through the years we have accumulated knowledge and experience in dealing with stakeholders in hydrology and water management. Within this paper we will present importance of bottom-up approach to the stakeholders in water management in Croatia on two case studies: (1) Management of River Trebizat catchment area – irrigation of the Imotsko-Bekijsko rural parts; (2) Development of multipurpose water reservoirs at the River Orjava catchment area. Both projects were designed in the mid and late 1980's but due to the war were forgotten and on halt. River Trebizat meanders between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and acquires joint management by both countries. In 2010 and 2011 SLAP has organized conferences in both countries gathering all the relevant stakeholders from representatives of local and state governments, water management companies and development agencies to the scientist and interested NGO's. The conferences gave firm scientific background of the topic including presentation of all previous studies and measurements as well as model results but presented in manner appropriate to the stakeholders. The main result of the conference was contribution to the development of joint cross-border project sent to the EU Pre-Accession funds in December 2011 with the aim to strengthen capacities of both countries and prepare larger project dealing with management of the whole Trebizat catchment area to EU structural funds once Croatia enters EU in 2013. Similar approach was taken for the Orjava catchment in the northern Croatia. Construction of multipurpose water storage KAMENSKA with capacity of about 45 million cubic meters per year was planned in 1984 but the project was postponed due to the war activities and never realized. None the less, the need for Kamenska is great. Orjava river basin, tributary of river Sava, has great significance for the Posavina area and wider area of Pozega. Improvements in water supply, flood control, irrigation and renewable hydro energy are not possible without new management of river Orjava basin. On round table in Pozega in October 2011 we have managed to gather all the relevant stakeholders including regional governor, directors of Croatian waters (state owned water management company), representatives of ministries and regional development agencies. The result was revitalization of the Kamenska multipurpose water storage project and inclusion in the Croatian waters and regional plans for 2012. Both examples stress the importance of the bottom-up approach to the stakeholders in the water management and give the way how scientific research can be transmitted to the decision making establishment through organization of public events.