

NATO/SPS Pilot Study
Sustainable Use and Protection of Groundwater Resources – Transboundary
Water Management

Report of the Meeting held in Minsk, Belarus, on 8 and 9 November 2007

On 8th – 9th November 2007 in Minsk (Belarus) the second meeting of NATO pilot study project "Sustainable Use and Protection of Groundwater Resources - Transboundary Water Management - Belarus, Poland, Ukraine" was organized. In the meeting participated 32 representatives from Belarus, Israel, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine. Information on environmental protection and groundwater resources organization and management in particular countries was presented on the two-day session. During presentations the groundwater monitoring system, methodical issues concerning collection of samples and results interpretation were discussed in details.

Presented issues caused a heated discussion on future activities on transboundary region and possible realization of joint research projects. One essential element mentioned by many participants was the question of measurement methods unification and introducing joint activities among participating countries.

It was decided to make an initial project, which would allow to take up following activities:

- The choice of parameters monitored and creation of uniform groundwater quality and quantity database
- Realization of collective sampling of chosen points in particular countries along with samples collection and analysis, that would allow testing of measurement techniques used in other countries (Dutch method, UNESCO, EU) to work out the optimal solution
- Making a correlation of suggested monitoring points with their surface water equivalents
- Determination of results reliability by passing collected samples to various laboratories in Poland, Belarus and Ukraine and also laboratories in other countries.

An important element pointed by participants was an idea of creation of common knowledge base, which would gather scattered materials and working out a method of efficient information exchange among countries of the project.

The next operation, which would allow more effective water and environmental protection management on the transboundary region in the future, is the identification of scientific institutions in particular countries, connected with the subject. The cooperation of those institutions will allow creation and organization of scientific and research network.

Monitoring research is integrally connected to the risk assessment. Considering above-mentioned, the importance of determination and inventory of "hotspots" (spots that menace ground and surface water) was highlighted.

Among discussed issues was also setting an operating rules for working groups in participating countries – regularity, complexity, fast acting and also responsibility of every side.