

Capacity building program for water councils in Crimea, Ukraine

Report Seminar for the water councils of Dzhankoi, Krasnogvardeiskoie and Simferopol (delivered in Februari and March of 2010)

Goal of the project

Goal of the project is to develop and offer a tailor made seminar of two sessions of two days each for the water councils in Crimea, Ukraine. Furthermore, one of the goals of the capacity building is to start with the creation of a sustainable training organization in Crimea.

General aim from the proposal is:

The seminar gives tools to all members of the water council to improve their performance and to contribute to the work of water boards. The seminar contributes to more knowledge, the appropriate attitude and governing skills.

The professional training by SWO for the members of the water councils of Dzhankoi, Krasnogvardeiskoie and Simferopol is part of the LOGO East II twinning project and financed by the Dutch Water Board Bank.



Context

During the Soviet Union time a hierarchical and top-down water management organisation was established. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the water management organisation had to adapt to market economy and had to deal with smaller budgets. Water management tasks were transferred between state authority, local governments and private sector, which resulted in an unclear division of tasks and responsibilities and in the poor conditions of the present water system. This transition process is still not completed today.

The Water Management Departments faced the problem how to communicate with the large amount of new and diverse groups of water users, as their communication was organised for top-down provision of information and services to a small homogeneous group of large water users.

During the LOGO East I twinning project a Water Communication Platform of stakeholders was established. This platform was called a water council. The goal of the water councils is to connect the goals of the water service delivery organisations and the water users. The water councils are still very immature; the members feel that they have a lack of knowledge for the fulfilment of their tasks. The organisational structure of the water council is still unclear and there is a lack of legal basis for sustainable functioning of the water council.

To support the water councils in their lack of knowledge, skills and attitude an assessment for the training needs of the water councils was carried out by Wateropleidingen (SWO), the training institute for the Dutch water sector. Based on the priority of the training demands, SWO was asked to develop and to offer a tailor made training for the members of the water councils of Dzhankoi, Krasnogvardeiskoie and Simferopol. This report gives the result of this project.

Development of the seminar

Based on the need assessment SWO designed the program of the seminar. The seminar is developed according to the standards and way of working of SWO. For and by professionals and tailor made for the target group.



A small part of the seminar is lectured by Ukrainians and representatives of two Dutch Water Boards involved in the twinning project. In order to realize a tailor made, appropriate program, a lot of information had to be exchanged between the professionals from Crimea and the Dutch professionals. Therefore SWO visited in September 2009 the WMD's and members of the water council to fine tune the program. The program was agreed upon with all the three water councils well in advance of the offering.

In order to reach a successful seminar SWO started a narrow cooperation with a Crimean counterpart who fulfilled the role of course manager. This course manager is coached by SWO.

As a lot of the program consisted of skills and training components, just a small amount of hand outs was produced.

Methods

The seminar is divided into 2 sessions. Each session has a theme and consists of diverse teaching methods, like lecture, role play, group discussion, presentation, assignment etc. The seminar program in brief:

- Session 1: Good governance (2 days)
 - Inventory Regional problems and challenges
 - Development vision of the water council
 - Skills of a good governor
 - Development strategic program
 - Cooperation with institutions
 - Experiences of the Dutch Water Board
 - Interest- Pay-Say
 - Influence without legislation



- Session 2: Stakeholders (2 days)
 - Member of the water council as Ambassador and Representative
 - Communication skills: presentation to stakeholders
 - Reaching consensus and Force field analysis
 - Experiences of the Dutch Water Board
 - Cooperative governance
 - Cooperative work
 - Communication skills: Good governance and integrity in the media



The outline of the program is general and the largest part will be uniform for each water council. Due to the similar experience of the three water councils and the regional similarities (stakeholders, local water management problems) same version of the seminar was offered to Dzhankoi, Krasnogvardeiskoie and Simferopol water councils. In future the seminar can easily be adapted for other water councils.

Delivery of the seminars

The seminars for Crimean water councils were offered in February and March of 2010. Trainers were both Dutch professionals and Ukrainian professionals. Also the results of the seminar (f.i. focus on stakeholders, identity of the board) were integrated in the water councils strategic development plans.



Results

Participants



Each of the three Crimean water councils is unique yet most of the problems they face are similar in fact although some problems differ and are peculiar to the specific water council. In Dzhankoi the water council is composed mainly of water users – agricultural and agro-industrial companies, small and large farmers etc. Its chairman is an owner of a large agro-industrial company. According to the chairman the series of training seminars allowed the water council to grow into a team of active and interested members (previously being a group of self minded individuals) who can find common grounds to jointly protect and lobby for their interests and resolve their problems.

Most appreciated aspect of the training was the methodology of reaching consensus between different stakeholders and working with different interest and different opinions. As the result, the water council started developing its corporate culture in which every point of view is respected and considered. The training also allowed identifying most active members of the water council who will become its “backbone” in the years to come. Most of the water council members attended both days of the two training seminars and it was appreciated that attendance of all members of water council is critical during this kind of trainings.



The Krasnogvardeiskoie water council is chaired by the Deputy Head of the district State Administration and includes as its members primarily senior level (mostly top managers) representatives of all state institutions managing or having to deal with water issues at the district level.



As the result of the training based on real life local examples all members of the water council acknowledged that after all it is possible to reach consensus for difficult and controversial questions despite the oftentimes differing interests of their stakeholders. Participant appreciated that once the decision has been taken by the water council its members (in spite of the fact that they might have had a different position) must become its ambassadors to their corresponding stakeholders and facilitate the implementation of this decision.

Following the training the water council decided to review its strategic action plan using the methodology and techniques learnt at the seminar. The training participants felt that it was very important for all members of water council to attend this training in person. Moreover, as the chairman of the water council attended both days of the two trainings but left very early and did not stay to work with the team during the training sessions the water council members decided to seek his replacement.

In Simferopol the water council is not in fact legalized (officially registered) yet being still a water communication platform. It is chaired by the Director of the Salgir Water Management Department.



This training brought to its participants an understanding of the importance of having such an instrument as the water council officially in place. This training initiated the development of a real team of active and interested members who learnt during the training the techniques of how to find common grounds/reach consensus to jointly protect and lobby for their interests and resolve their problems. It also allowed identifying which of the available stakeholders having to deal with water issues shall become members of the water council in order to more efficiently tackle and resolve the current water problems.

All in all the water council members of Dzhankoi, Krasnogvardeiskoie and Simferopol were all very satisfied with the seminar series. During the first seminar they had to get familiar with the methods and the interaction. After the seminar series was finished they all well understood and appreciated the program and the methods used.

The board members showed a positive intention to cooperate with each other and they mentioned the discussions and interaction as valuable. Also the exchange of Dutch and Crimean experience was felt as very positive. The water council members worked well together and a lot of understanding was built. They listened to the arguments and ideas of their colleagues and were willing to take into account their viewpoint. They suggested that there would be a follow up with exchange of information from the Dutch water boards and the Crimean water councils.



Program

The draft program from the proposal was developed well in advance of the seminar. The program of the seminar had a clear topic; the schedule was designed to create enough changes in teaching methods. The participants appreciated the most the different practices, interactions and discussions. They experienced that “learning by doing” will lead to the best results. At the end of each session they act like a team and they had a lot of ideas to make their water council a success.

The participants needed time to digest the information – new items, best practical means and own ideas. The sequence in the 2 seminars is good; a period of approx. 4 weeks between the first and the second series of the seminar is a good period.

Trainers

The daily seminar chair was in hands of SWO and the Crimean course manager. Depending on the subjects representatives from the Crimean WMD, village or district council and the Dutch Water board of Groot Salland and de Dommel gave some lectures.

The presence of a governor and a member of the water board during the seminar sessions was very appreciated by the participants. The participants really appreciated the exchange of knowledge and experience in the sessions.

The input of a Crimean expert on water and agriculture and the performance of the Crimean course manager as a chairmen was also very much appreciated. The seminar is seen as a coproduction between the Dutch and Crimean partners.



Venue

In total 6 seminars were offered - 2 in Dzhankoi, 2 in Krasnogvardeiskoe and 2 in Simferopol and all of them were held in other venues. The WMD's took care for an appropriate venue and catering. The course manager and SWO arranged all the tools such as pens, flip chart, paper etc. Most times the "class room" was OK; sometimes a little hot or noisy.

Organization in Crimea

In the proposal the appointment of two Crimean counterparts for SWO was foreseen. A course manager and a course manager assistant would organize the seminars in Crimea, supervised by SWO. The course manager was involved in the overall organization, preparation of the program and the contact with the professionals to hold a presentation. The course assistant was involved in logistics, copies and communication. In this project all the tasks were done by the course manager.

The communication between SWO and course manager was done by e-mail and the understanding of the needs improved during the seminar series. All logistic arrangements were made by the course manager well in advance.

Recommendations

The coproduction between the Dutch and Ukrainian partners has been very successful in the designing, preparation and delivery of the seminars. The evaluation results of the participants show us that they are also very pleased with these seminar sessions. The water councils act like a team and have a lot of input for their own governing program. Now the water councils are in charge.



For the water councils SWO recommend:

- a coaching program for the people who support the water councils;
- a 1 or 2-day workshop for all the water councils at the end of 2010 to refresh the lessons learned, to discuss the results achieved by the Crimean water councils and to exchange the experiences between the water councils;
- a 1 day seminar about maintenance old pumps, cost and benefits of new pumps;
- the best time for seminars is in November and February. In these periods the members of the water council, mostly farmers, can be present at the seminar.
- an incentive or contract for the participants to make them participate during the seminar sessions. It was disappointing to see that mostly on the second day the members of the water council had other priorities than this seminar. Due to the political situation, election of the president, some participants were not able to come to the seminar;

For the capacity building SWO recommend:

- a coaching program for the course manager to make some further steps to institutionalize a "Crimean Water Academy"

Appendices

1 Evaluation and Lessons learned for first seminar session

2 Evaluation and Lessons learned for second seminar session

