

Summary
of the parallel audit of the flood control preparedness
in the Upper Tisza Region

Participating SAIs: State Audit Office of Hungary (Coordinator)
Accounting Chamber of Ukraine

The audit covered the years: 2004-2005

Audit report year: 2005 (signed in June, 2005 in Kyiv by SAIs' Presidents)

The area of the basin of the Upper Tisza is one of Europe's wettest regions, at high risk from floods. Floods cause major damage to Ukraine and Hungary alike, and this determines to a large extent the parties' cooperation in preventing the damaging effects of water and averting the consequences of floods.

Almost 30 percent of the total water output of the basin of the Tisza River is generated in the territory of Ukraine, and within that in the region of Sub-Carpathia.

The execution of a parallel audit covering the flood control preparedness in the Upper Tisza Region was preceded by an agreement signed in Budapest, on 4 March 2004, by the President of the State Audit Office of Hungary and the Chairman of the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine.

The audit objective was to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the Transboundary Water Agreement entered into by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of Ukraine (issued in Hungary via Government Decree No. 117/1999 (VIII. 6.), on the Ukrainian side via the decree of execution defined in Decree No. 34 dated 20 May 1999 of the Cabinet of Ministers). It serves as international legal basis for the cooperation between Hungary and Ukraine in respect of transboundary waters.

The parallel audit was integrated, in case of the Hungarian State Audit Office, in the performance audit task entitled "*Audit of Preparations for the Prevention of Natural Disasters*", while in the case of the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine it was a part of the task entitled "*Analysis and Audit of the Execution of the State Programme Covering the Complex Flood Control Preparedness of the Catchment Area of the Tisza River and the Sub-Carpathian Region for the Period 2002 to 2006 and the Forecast until 2015*". The audit offices submitted their respective reports to the legislative bodies of their countries. The joint report presents the summary of the findings made on the Hungarian and Ukrainian sides, as well as the details of the joint conclusions concerning the fields of cooperation, which cover the transboundary waters.

SUMMARY OF THE AUDIT CONDUCTED BY THE ACCOUNTING CHAMBER OF UKRAINE

The audit by the Ukrainian party stated that the situation had not, basically, improved in Ukraine's Sub-Carpathian region, in spite of the directives on the measures aimed at preventing flood disasters and avert the danger, which were issued at the highest state level.

“The Complex Flood Protection Programme for the Basin of the Tisza River in the Sub-Carpathian region 2002-2006 and Forecast until 2015” (hereinafter: Complex Programme) set as its goal the complex treatment of the flood waves of the Tisza Basin, the protection of settlements, facilities and fields against water damage, and the minimisation of the destructive impact of floods and inland water problems. However, the results of the audit proved that in the period 2002-2004 the Complex Programme was not implemented at the scheduled pace, and a number of planned measures were not taken due to the lack of the required organisational and financial background.

The audit of the implementation of the Complex Programme revealed that the Government had failed to coordinate the activities of the ministries and the central and local executive organs responsible for the execution of the Act. It was stated that the ministries, authorities and local organs of power realised the measures at local level and irregularly, and therefore these measures did not secure any efficient, complex flood protection. The Government did not ensure any legal support for the Complex Programme. The absence of legal rules relating to the management of protection against water damage and to cooperation by the organisations of water management and service providers, to the operation thereof and to the investment mechanism of their activities realised on the lands with water stocks, endangers the provision of the requisite level of flood protection.

The proposals of the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine stressed that the Inter-Ministerial Cooperation Board set up to regulate the issues of water management and to implement the Complex Programme should carry out much more effective activity. Furthermore, they draw the attention to the point that the Board should audit more strictly the ministries and authorities involved in the Programme, particularly the appropriate preparation of the fulfilment of the measures in all phases of implementation (planning, reconciliation, contracting, etc.), and it should provide the appropriate financial support.

According to the findings of the Ukrainian party, the existing dyke system does not constitute a reliable flood control complex. There are serious deficiencies in the provision of the Sub-Carpathian mountains with flood protection facilities at Rahó, Ökörmező and Técső. The Ukrainian party does not have unified protection plans for its existing defensive facilities, therefore there is no technical basis for judging the defensive capacity of the facilities.

The joint Ukrainian-Hungarian intention to endeavour to construct, on an identical scale, the dyke system at the Upper Tisza is not sufficient in itself; the programmes of dyke development must also be harmonised in the interest of success, for the purpose of implementation at a nearly identical pace. The fact has to be reckoned with that in consequence of the implementation of dyke development programmes, the number and probability of dykes bursting will be reduced. The execution of joint research programmes and impact studies will be an expedient tool for the evaluation of factors which increase the flood level at the sections which have become safer, which are to be taken into consideration upon the further planning of the flood-related emergency storage lake programme on both the Ukrainian and Hungarian sides.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SAIS OF UKRAINE AND THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY

Following their examinations, the Hungarian State Audit Office and the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine submitted the following recommendations to the national Governments and responsible authorities:

- in the framework of updating the regulation of transboundary water cooperation the SAIs propose complementing the regulation of the cooperation in water damage prevention by provisions relating to the treatment of situations caused by dykes bursting, as well as the regulation of hydro-meteorological and water management cooperation by provisions relating to the operation of the implemented monitoring system; since the powers of the Government delegates are laid down in the Transboundary Water Agreement, the contracting parties (Governments) have to ensure the enforceability of the obligations according to their own legal systems;
- the SAIs draw the attention of the Government delegates of the Hungarian-Ukrainian Transboundary Water Agreement to the necessity of providing for the conditions of a border-crossing practice which meets the prescriptions, by initiating governmental measures on behalf of their respective countries, if necessary, and to that of initiating the specification and supplementation of the international treaties, depending on the justified cases of border-crossing out of turn;
- in the interest of the success of the positive joint intention to make efforts, in connection with the construction of the flood control systems, for the construction to an identical extent of the dyke system, the SAI also propose harmonising the schedule of implementation; besides the developments on the Hungarian side, the maintenance of the flood control systems also requires the provision of appropriate financial conditions; on the Ukrainian side we consider the survey of the protective facilities and the preparation of protection plans to be urgent tasks (e.g. they should be

included in the objectives of the projects, which are to be implemented by grants won in international tenders);

- the prescription of the Agreement relating to the obligation of information and agreement should be kept in mind by both parties in the elaboration of the concepts of flood control developments, in the further development of the joint systems for inland water protection, in the application of unified localisation plans, as well as in the projects implemented on their own or with international assistance; they should urge, furthermore, joint investigations analysing the cumulative effect of the planned Ukrainian and Hungarian interventions (e.g. by the elaboration of a joint programme of modelling and planning), with particular regard to the area of the flood and inland water protection dyked marsh of Bereg and Beregszász and to the area of the Szőlős District;
- both parties judged as important joint research relating to flood prevention; the audit, too, found it justified to implement the objectives of research resolved at the XIth meeting of the transboundary water delegates of the Governments; it would be expedient to disclose, in the framework of cooperation, the opportunities for EU grants serving such objectives;
- in order to achieve higher-standard services through the flood observation, alarm and forecast system the SAIs deem it justified to further develop the system in the following fields: increasing the number of stations in the higher regions, joint processing of the data from meteorological radar and terrestrial stations, development of forecasting models, execution of cartographic and geodesic works required for the forecasts; the SAIs propose integrating the satellite tachometers constructed with US assistance into the joint Ukrainian-Hungarian system; furthermore, the SAIs deem it expedient to combine the IT systems of the Upper Tisza organisations of flood and disaster protection of Hungary and Ukraine;
- to increase the efficiency of bilateral and multilateral cooperation the SAIs propose that the Government delegates should monitor the execution of the provisions of the international agreements, and to provide thereby for a coordinated contribution by the sectors and responsible organs involved in the territories of their respective countries, and, if necessary, to initiate steps requiring governmental intervention in order to enforce the national and joint interests.