

Minutes of meeting

of the first official meeting of the Monitoring Committee of Operational Programme “Environment 2007-2013”

16 January 2008, 10:00 h, “Sofia” hall, “Kempinski Hotel Zografski”

Official part of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Monitoring Committee the deputy-minister Mr. Chavdar Georgiev, who presented the agenda of the meeting and gave the floor to the minister of environment and water Mr. Djevdet Chakarov.

Minister Chakarov welcomed the participants and wished successful work to the Committee and to adopt the main documents included in the agenda, which will enable start of the work under the three main priorities of the operational programme. He expressed his gratitude to the experts of the Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW), the representatives of the European Commission (EC) and of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and all partners who took place in the preparation and successful and timely completion of a good programming document the implementation of which is pending.

Further on minister Chakarov presented the project preparedness under priorities 1 and 2 of the programme and he appealed to the municipalities to be more active in the preparation and submission of projects and also assured them that the MOEW will assist for further building of their capacity and expressed his hope by the middle of the year serious projects to be successfully contracted. He defined as priority the construction of waste water treatment plants along the Black sea, as well as on the entire territory of the country, starting from their construction in agglomerations with over 10 000 p.e., for which the commitment of the Republic of Bulgaria is by the year 2010. Regarding priority 3 of the programme, the MOEW is ready to approve all draft orders for the protected areas under the Birds Directive defined by Decree of the Council of Ministers Nr. 802 of 4 December 2007. Under this priority the MOEW, non-governmental organisations, the academic community shall gather their efforts in order to fulfill the ambitious objectives set in relation to protection of the biodiversity in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The floor was given to the minister of finance Mr. Plamen Oresharski who congratulated the minister of environment and water and the team of the ministry for the efforts made to compensate for the delay at the initial stage of the preparation of the operational programme. He also noted that the finalized programming and approval of the operational programmes has been the easier stage of the process, the real work is pending. Minister Oresharski emphasized on the capacity at central level and capacity of the beneficiaries – municipalities, non-governmental organizations and the enormous efforts that are required in this respect. The experience of the other member states shows that the preparedness to absorb the funds is not an absolute value and is an ongoing process of improving of the capacity. As to the main documents included on the agenda of this first official meeting, on the one hand they are a good basis for ensuring transparency of the work of the Management body and the public control on the entire process, and on the other hand they guarantee the required flexibility in the management of the funds under the programme. Finally minister Oresharski wished successful work to the committee and maximum degree of absorption of the funds.

The floor was given to Ms. Ginka Chavdarova, executive director of the National Association of Municipalities, who expressed her satisfaction on behalf of one of the main beneficiaries under the programme that the real work has already started. In the same time this means transfer of the burden of responsibility to the beneficiaries. She underlined that at the moment work with the newly elected mayors and chairmen of municipal councils is on-going in order to accelerate the preparation of the projects. Ms. Chavdarova underlined that the municipalities, like the MOEW, have invested much in capacity building. She noted that they still expect the Manual for beneficiaries, in order to guarantee that the projects developed are acceptable to the Managing Authority (MA).

Ms. Chavdarova added that as a country with local self-governance, the development of municipal projects should be carried out with the participation of the population. Only a municipal management that works with the citizens on daily basis and has the trust and support of its citizens may achieve progress. Ms. Chavdarova concluded her speech wishing to the committee to report many approved municipal projects at the end of the year.

Mr. Renaldo Mandmets – Head of Bulgarian Unit in DG “Regio” of the EC, congratulated the participants with the adopted Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013”, which is a good strategic document with clearly defined objectives. He also drew the attention to two main challenges in the programme implementation. In the first place this is the long-term challenge to absorb all funds by the end of the programming period. In the second place is achieving compliance with community legislation in the field of waste management respectively by 2009/ 2010. These are great challenges, which require the presence of clearly formulated strategy and plans. Another important prerequisite is the proper implementation of the developed strategy, which requires learning from past experiences.

Mr. Mandmets warned that it will not be possible to foresee all problems and obstacles and consultations with the new member states will be extremely useful because they have faced the same problems only a few years ago. Moreover very similar to the Cohesion fund is the implemented at the moment ISPA instrument, under which there are 500 mil euro still unabsorbed, and the deadline is 2010. It will be especially difficult to absorb these funds, together with the funds under the operational programme. Very often there will be “learning by doing”. The elaboration of projects that are technically good is essential. In order to prepare such good projects he appealed to the Bulgarian side to make use of the technical assistance. He also assured that his team in DG „Regional policy” of the EC is always ready to provide advice and consultations both officially and unofficially. He addressed the Bulgarian side to develop and keep its experts who work in the field of the operational programmes, as the capacity is a key factor for its success.

Mr. Jean-Marc Arnoux from the European Investment Bank (EIB) noted that Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013” is a very good instrument to implement the requirements of the community legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria. He reminded that the EIB has worked with the MOEW since the pre-accession period under the ISPA Programme and expressed his satisfaction that together with the EC and “JASPERS”, the EIB will contribute to the implementation of this operational programme.

Mr Arnoux added in this context that the Republic of Bulgaria and the EIB have signed in December 2007 a loan agreement of EUR 700 million for the EIB to co-finance projects eligible under this Operation Programme Environment, as well as other operational programmes.

Mr. Chavdar Georgiev announced the end the official part of the meeting and thanked to the official guests for their participation. He also thanked the media for the expressed interest and announced that on 17 January 2008 at 14 h at the building of the MOEW on 67 Gladstone St. will take place a press conference for the results of this first official meeting of the Monitoring Committee.

Working part of the meeting

Mr. Chavdar Georgiev opened the working part of the meeting and proposed the members of the committee to proceed to successive review of the drafts of Internal Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee of Operational Programme “Environment 2007-2013”, the Code of Conduct of the committee members and Declaration of Impartiality. He informed the participants that the disseminated version of the documents incorporates comments made in advance, as well as comments raised at the working meeting tat took place on 10 January 2008.

Mr. Dimitar Pehlivanov presented the draft Internal Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee, Code of Conduct of the members of the Monitoring Committee and the Declaration of Impartiality.

The discussion was opened on **the draft Internal Rules of Operation of the Monitoring Committee of Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013”**. Specific proposals for revisions in the document were addressed and discussed. Also Mr. Lalov from the MA of Operational programme “Competition” asked for the opinion of the EC representatives with respect to Art. 5, Par. 20, namely: The provision of this paragraph is a precedent in the internal rules of operation in the internal rules of the monitoring committees and it is necessary to clarify this issue for all operational programmes. Having in mind that Bulgarian is already an official language in the EU, is it necessary the Bulgarian side to translate the documents for the committee, which usually are of great volume. Mr. Razmussen replied that he respects Bulgarian as an official language in the EU and the provision the working language at the committees to be Bulgarian is natural. On the other hand the provision of Art. 5, Par. 20 related to translation is good practice, which shall be disseminated also in the other monitoring committees. This will ensure more cooperative and efficient work.

Mr. Chavdar Georgiev invited the members of the committee to present their comments in writing to the secretariat, after which the committee to vote on each of them. He gave the floor to Mr. Margaritov – Head of the MA on Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013”, who clarified the principle of voting laid down in the draft Internal Rules. The quorum of the meeting was checked pursuant to Art. 5, Par. 12 of the draft Internal Rules and 46 out of 49 members/ substitutes were registered as present.

The following proposals submitted in writing to the Secretariat were discussed and voted:

On Art. 1, Par. 6 of the draft Internal Rules, submitted by Ms. Lilyana Pavlova from the Certifying Authority, Ministry of Finance: The paragraph shall be revised in the following way: “The Monitoring Committee shall be informed of the report on the financial implementation of the operational programme prepared by the certifying authority”, because there is actually one such report.

The proposal was adopted with 45 votes in favour and 1 vote opposed. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 1, Par. 12 of the draft Internal Rules, submitted by Ms. Svetlana Boyanova from the Confederation of the Employers and Industrialists: The text related to the horizontal policies to be the same as the respective text in the criteria. Since they are not yet adopted by the committee, the proposal was re-formulated in the following way: „The Monitoring Committee shall monitor the activities undertaken by the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Body of the Operational Programme aimed at achieving compliance with the EU horizontal policies”.

The proposal was adopted with 44 votes in favour and 2 votes abstained. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 2, Par. 3 the following alternative proposals were presented and voted:

1. The first sentence of the paragraph to be deleted, namely “Members of the Monitoring Committee are representatives and their substitutes.”, because it creates confusion as to the composition of the monitoring committee; 2. The paragraph shall be revised in the following way: „The members of the committee, a representatives and his/ her substitute who exercises his delegated rights and obligations, from each institution represented, have the right to one vote.”.

The first proposal was adopted with 42 votes in favour, 3 votes opposed and 1 vote abstained. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 2 of the draft Internal Rules the following proposals of the EC representatives, presented by Mr. Richard Masa and Mr. Carsten Razmussen, were submitted and voted:

From Art. 2, Par. 7, item „a” the first part „, shall participate in the decision-making process” shall be deleted, because the committee has mainly monitoring functions.

On Art. 2 of the draft Internal Rules: To include a new paragraph with the following text: „The Head of the Audit Authority (Directorate „Audit of the EU funds” at the Ministry of Finance), as well as representatives of the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and other financial institutions take part in the meetings of the committee in their advisory capacity.” According the requirements of Regulation (EC) Nr. 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

On the above stated proposal Ms. Dobrinka Krasteva, MF, made a comment that the requirements regarding the composition of the committee are included in Decree of the Council of Ministers Nr. 182/21.07.2006 on establishing of monitoring committees of the national Strategic reference Framework and the operational programmes co-financed by the EU Structural funds and the Cohesion fund. Moreover the composition of the committee is

according to the Order of the minister of environment and water. Mr. Lalov from the MA of Operational programme „Competition” stated his opinion that it is not appropriate to repeat the text of the above Decree of the Council of Ministers. Moreover the regulation has direct effect.

In his turn Mr. Valentin Yovev from the Union of Economic Initiative shared his opinion that the expression „and other financial institutions” should be deleted from the proposed text, because it is too broadly formulated. In reply Mr. Razmussen clarified that there should be an option to invite experts from the EBRD, the World bank etc. at the committee meetings as observers.

The proposals were adopted with 38 votes in favour and 8 votes opposed. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 2, Par. 5 of the draft Internal Rules, submitted by Mr. Iliya Keleshev from the Association of the Industrial Capital in Bulgaria: The paragraph to be revised in the following way: “In case of unreasoned absence of a member or his substitute at three consequent meetings of the Monitoring Committee, the Chairman of the Committee shall initiate a procedure for their substitution.”, since one institution may be presented in the committee by several members.

The proposal was adopted with 40 votes in favour, 4 votes opposed and 2 votes abstained. The document shall be revised accordingly.

Ms. Svetlana Boyanova expressed her reserve that after deletion of the first sentence of Art. 2, Par. 3, the text of Art. 2, Par. 5 shall be „representative or his substitute” in view of achieving greater clarity.

On Art. 2 of the draft Internal Rules, submitted on behalf of Mr. Emil Ivanov - Regional Governor of Sofia-region: To include a new paragraph under Art. 2 with the following text: „The regional governor is entitled to delegate rights to his representative from the regional administration, in case of his absence from the Monitoring committee meetings”.

Ms. Tatyana Petkova – counselor of the minister of environment and water and an observer in the committee, expressed her consideration that this proposal is in contradiction with the principle of membership in the committee. The composition of the committee is defined by an order of the minister of the environment and water, and the regional governor is a member in his capacity of representative of a given institution (The Regional Council for Development of the South-West Planning Region) and pursuant to this order there shall be a substitute who represents the same institution.

The proposal was not subjected to voting, because it is submitted in the absence of the respective member and substitute.

On Art. 3, Par. 2, item „b”, submitted by Mr. Lalov: The word “set” to be replaced by “propose”, since according to other provisions of the Internal Rules the agenda of the meeting is subject to voting.

The proposal was adopted with 44 votes in favour and 2 votes abstained. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 4, Par. 2, item „g”, submitted by Mr. Sasho Angelov, counselor to the minister of health: The paragraph to be revised through adding a provision the information to be ensured by the secretariat to the committee members to be performed by e-mail, when it is only for information, and on paper, when on the basis of this information decisions will be taken. In the process of the discussion the proposal was revised in the following way: after “ensures current information” to add „by e-mail”.

The proposal was adopted unanimously and the document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 5, Par. 9, submitted by Mr. Yovev: The period for submission of the materials for the meetings by the secretariat to be extended to „at least 15 working days”.

Opinions were expressed, including on the part of the EC that the period of 10 days provided in the draft is sufficient, but should be obligatory and shall be observed for each meeting.

After voting, the proposal for extending the period was rejected with 40 votes opposed and 6 votes in favour.

On Art. 5, Par. 17, submitted by the EC representatives: The period, in which the committee members may send comments on the minutes of the meetings to be revised from 5 to 10 days.

The proposal was adopted with 45 votes in favour and 1 abstained. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On the issue raised by Mr. Georgiev related to the discussion proposed by Mr. Lalov on Art. 5, Par. 20 of the draft Internal Rules concerning the necessity to provide english translation of the documents and interpretation for the committee meetings for the representatives of the EC and EIB, Mr. Lalov stated that after Mr. Razmussen’s reply he had not formulated a proposal in writing.

Mr. Dimitar Brankov from the Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA) asked for additional information regarding the practice in this respect in the other member states. Mr. Razmussen clarified that in the new member states there are two models: The first model coincides with the one provided in Art. 5, Par. 20, namely: the working language of the committee is the official language in the respective country, and at the same time there is a requirement for English translation. Under the other model the working language is English, but this is not an EC requirement and is a decision of the relevant member state (for example in Hungary).

On Art. 6, Par. 2 of the draft Internal Rules, submitted by the EC representatives: The paragraph to be revised in the following way: “The decisions shall be made in principle with consensus”. In reply to an expressed opinion that it is more appropriate only the decision-making by majority to remain in the document, Mr. Razmussen clarified that the principle of consensus is a time-saving measure. Usually at the meetings of the monitoring committees the decisions are taken with consensus, which reflects their role of observers. There are only several issues on which they actually proceed to voting, e. g. the selection criteria, annual reports etc.

As a result of the held discussion, the proposal was reformulated in the following way: „shall aim at taking its decisions with consensus.”

The so formulated proposal was adopted with 45 votes in favour, 3 votes opposed and 4 votes abstained. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 7, Par. 2 of the draft Internal Rules: To add to the text of the paragraph “by e-mail”, in order to ensure operativeness while sending the materials for review following the written procedure.

The proposal was adopted with 45 votes in favour and 1 voice opposed. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 7, Par. 3 the following proposals were submitted regarding the period of sending of the materials: 1. to provide a period of 10 working days for co-ordination of the materials; 2. after „within the deadline specified in the documentation” to add “but not less than 5 working days”.

After the held discussion and voting, the second proposal, **submitted by Ms. Galya Mihaylova, MF, OP “Technical Assistance”** was adopted and the document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 7, Par. 4, submitted by Ms. Galya Mihaylova, MF, OP “Technical Assistance”: The paragraph to be revised in the following way: “ The decision shall be accepted if there is no dissent expressed and more than half of the positions have been received”.

The proposal was adopted with 42 votes in favour and 1 vote abstained. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 8, submitted by Ms. Lilyana Pavlova, representative of the Certifying Authority – “National fund” directorate, MF and Ms. Galya Mihaylova, MF, OP “Technical Assistance”: The word “measures” to be replaced by „operations”, having in mind that the term “measures” is not used for the current programming period.

The proposal was adopted unanimously. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 9, Par. 6, submitted by Mr. Botyo Tabakov from the Bulgarian Mining and Geological Association and supplemented by Mr. Brankov from the BIA: In the definition of “conflict of interests” the term “interest” to be divided into a) personal interest, which includes favourable interest towards him/her or his/ her family, close relatives and b) financial interest for companies and organizations (without the expression “with which he/ she works or is in political relations”).

Ms. Nelly Yordanova from the MA of Operational programme “Transport” stated her opinion the entire item to be deleted, having in mind that these texts will be included in the declaration. In reply Ms. Tatyana Petkova clarified that the definition is necessary mainly for the purpose of the declaration of impartiality, which the members sign. In view of the different definitions of this term in the national and European legislation, the draft Internal Rules contains a definition that considers the nature of the work of the committee and respectively its members.

The proposal for supplementing Art. 9, Par. 6 was adopted unanimously. The document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 9, Par. 9, submitted by Mr. Brankov of the BIA: The paragraph to be revised in the following way: “The members of the committee shall not disseminate data that are professional, commercial or industrial secret”.

The proposal was adopted unanimously and the document shall be revised accordingly.

On Art. 10, Par. 2, item „a”, submitted by Mr. Brankov from the BIA: The proposals for revision of the Internal Rules to be submitted on the initiative of the chairman or 1/3 of the members of the Monitoring Committee.

Mr. Razmussen from the EC shared his opinion that there is not any risk in the possibility provided in the current draft each member of the committee to be able to initiate such revisions.

The proposal was rejected with 21 votes opposed and 18 votes in favour.

Proposals on Art. 10, Par. 3 on preliminary coordination of the proposals for revisions of the Internal Rules with the MA: The “coordination” to be replaced by “informing”. Alternative proposals were made, such as “submission”. The opinion was stated that the voting is not necessary, because the MA has his/ her representatives in the Monitoring committee, who may present their position on the meetings. Mr. Razmussen supported the text included in the draft, because the MA is responsible for the implementation of the operational programme. Ms. Tatyana Petkova added that in this manner time is given to the MA to check the compliance of the respective proposal with the community legislation in force.

The proposal on Art. 10, Par. 3 was reformulated in the following way: “Each proposal for amending the present rules of procedure shall be communicated in advance to the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme, which presents its position on the submitted proposal at the meeting of the Monitoring Committee.”.

The proposal was adopted unanimously and the document shall be revised accordingly.

Then the entire text of the Internal Rules of Operation of the Monitoring Committee for Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013” was subjected to voting. The document was adopted with the voted proposals for revisions with 44 votes in favour and 2 votes opposed.

Then it was proceeded to **the draft Code of Conduct of the members of the Monitoring Committee of Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013”**. Ms. Tatyana Petkova presented the comment received in advance from Ms. Lilyana Pavlova, Directorate “National Fund”, MF regarding inclusion (as a first principle) of a new principle “Legality” with the following contents: **“Legality.** The members of the Monitoring Committee through their activities shall protect the interests of society and are governed solely by law. They shall fulfill duly, conscientiously, precisely and professionally the tasks assigned to them and counteract to corruption and other illegal activities.”

The proposal was adopted unanimously and the document shall be revised accordingly.

A comment was made to the text, namely principle “Independency”, where the word “individuals” should be replaced by „physical persons”, as well as a comment regarding the overall technical and grammatical correction of the text. The MA representatives undertook the commitment to correct the text of the document.

The entire text of the Code of Conduct of the members of the Monitoring Committee of Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013” was subjected to voting. The document was adopted unanimously with the voted proposals for revisions.

On the text of the **Declaration of Impartiality** Ms. Tatyana Petkova informed that the text had been revised according to the comments made at the working meeting held on 10 January 2008.

On Par. 2, submitted by Ms. Galya Mihaylova, MF, OP “Technical Assistance”: the text to be revised to „my participation in the work”, while deleting the “preparation of documents”, since the members of the committee do not participate in the preparation of the documents for the meetings.

On Par. 3, submitted by Mr. Tabakov from the Bulgarian Mining and Geological Association: the expression „enduring of measures” to be replaced by “bearing of responsibilities” in view of its more precise formulation.

The entire text of the Declaration of Impartiality was subjected to voting. The document was adopted unanimously with the voted revisions.

The Secretariat undertook to revise the text of the declaration and to disseminate it to the members/ substitutes of the committee for signature. The EC representatives informed that they should not sign the declaration, because according to their rules of operation they sign a general declaration with similar text in relation to their observer status.

Further on the floor was given to Ms. Malina Krumova from the MA of Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013”, who presented the **Criteria for Selection and for Prioritisation of Project Proposals under priority axes 1 and 2** and to Ms. Yana Georgieva, who in her turn presented the **Criteria for priority 3.**

Mr. Razmussen took the floor and presented an overall position on the draft criteria. He appealed to the Monitoring Committee not to start to discuss in detail the proposed documents, because the experience shows that such a format – an official meeting with 50 members, is not a working one for this purpose. He presented the EC opinion that the calls for project proposals shall be formulated in the most specific way, the scope of the procedure

shall be very clear. From there on the following evaluation of the project proposals is necessary:

1. To check the eligibility of the beneficiaries and of the project (yes/no questions); for such evaluation no special qualification is required;
2. Evaluation of the quality of the proposals, which includes:
 - a) whether the need is well analysed;
 - b) whether the proposed activities are meaningful – whether they address this need;
 - c) whether the project is well organised;
 - d) whether the measures are cost efficient;
 - e) how mature is the project – e.g. available building permits etc.

Mr. Razmussen expressed the position of the EC team that if the calls for proposals are well formulated and good evaluation is performed, prioritisation is not necessary at the project level, and even prioritisation will be harmful, because regardless how good is a project, it may never win in comparison to other projects that are of higher priority. Having in mind that all technical documents accompanying the project proposal have a defined period of validity, this will place obstacles before the respective beneficiaries.

Mr. Razmussen clarified that the EC proposes not to consider the prioritization criteria not because they are not good, but because they will lead to unequal treatment, as well as to problems at the project level. For example it is clear that the calls for proposals under priority 1 will be directed in the first place to waste water treatment plants, but if the municipalities are ready with quality water supply projects the technical documentation will be valid only 3 years and time and money will be required in order to start from scratch. Besides it is not fair to compare projects of different type.

As to the draft criteria under priority 3, there is a blur between eligibility and evaluation. It is also necessary to shorten them.

In reply **Mr. Margaritov** stated that the draft criteria for selection and for prioritization are a result of several months of work of the specialized directorates of the MOEW. However he stated that he accepts as reasonable the proposal to give a mandate for general criteria and specific formulation of the calls for proposals.

On a question of **Mr. Brankov** regarding to what extent the prioritization criteria are obligatory, Ms. Petkova replied that the criteria shall be approved by the Monitoring Committee in order the calls for proposals to be legitimate, and under the Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013” there are two stages envisaged – selection and prioritisation. In his turn Mr. Brankov asked the EC representatives to clarify the practice in other member states in this respect.

Mr. Razmussen underlined that obligatory are the selection criteria. For example in the Baltic countries there are 4-5 general criteria to be followed. In Romania on the operational programme for environment there are also 2 ½ pages of general criteria adopted and mandate is given to the MA to formulate specific calls for proposals. It is important to have clearly

formulated calls for proposals; in certain cases all applying project proposals will have to be approved and sometimes it will be necessary to set lower thresholds.

The advice of the EC was during the programming of the projects the Bulgarian side to keep as close as possible to reality and to experience from the implementation of projects.

In reply to **Mr. Chipev from the Bulgarian Academy of Science** Mr. Razmussen replied that especially in the Baltic countries the researches in the field of biodiversity are entirely financed from national funds.

Regarding the proposal of **Ms. Rakovska from the „Bluelink” Foundation** for inclusion of a criterion or a footnote “efficiency of the used resources”, Mr. Razmussen agreed that cost efficiency shall be considered and noted that again it is linked to the necessity to revise the selection criteria. He asked for a 10-minute break for discussion of the additional EC comments.

The discussion was renewed. After presentation of specific comments on the part of the EC on the text of the selection criteria under priority 1 (items II.9, II.10, III.2, III.5, III.11), Mr. Margaritov stated that in principle the MA accepts the EC proposal for having a broader mandate for formulation of the calls for proposals but the experts need time to consider the most recent comments of the EC. He proposed to undertake another approach, namely: the selection criteria to be adopted as a basis, and the MA to undertake to elaborate revised criteria by the end of February 2008.

In reply to the comment of Ms. Ekaterina Rakovska regarding criterion III.1 under priorities 1 and 2, as well as to the comment of Ms. Desislava Mihalkova from the State Agency on Tourism regarding revision of the number of equivalent population of the resorts, Mr. Chavdar Georgiev noted that the comments will be reviewed during the elaboration of new general criteria.

The EC representatives agreed and the following decision was taken unanimously: To adopt the selection criteria under priorities 1, 2 and 3 as a basis. Within a 15-day period the MA to elaborate new general criteria, with the assistance of the partners from the EC. The criteria shall be presented for adoption at an exceptional meeting of the committee or following the written procedure.

Regarding the criteria under priority “Technical assistance” Mr. Razmussen commented that the approach should be different than the one in the remaining priorities, because most of the funds are for structures of the MOEW and may be allocated by an Order of the minister. In reply Ms. Krumova clarified that the presented criteria under priority “Technical assistance” refer to the preparation of projects under priorities 1 and 2 for financing under the Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013”. For the funds intended for the MOEW structures a different approach is envisaged.

The following decision was taken unanimously: To adopt the selection criteria under priority “Technical assistance” as a basis. Within a 15-day period the MA to elaborate new general criteria, with the assistance of the partners from the EC. The criteria shall

be presented for adoption at an exceptional meeting of the committee or following the written procedure.

On a proposal to include terminology in the text of the criteria, Mr. Margaritov stated his opinion that this is not necessary, Moreover according to the comments of the EC the criteria shall be as concise as possible. Mr. Ivanov from the “Water” Directorate at the MOEW added that the terminology under priority 1 is according to Ordinance Nr. 6 of 9 November 2000 on emission limits for admissible content of harmful dangerous substances in the waste water discharged in water bodies.

Mr. Chavdar Georgiev proposed to proceed to the next item on the agenda. He gave the floor to Ms. Marta Stoycheva, who presented the draft of the **Communication Plan of the Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013”**. Mr. Chavdar Georgiev gave the floor to the members of the committee for comments on the draft document. The following proposals for revisions were made:

To revise the evaluation indicators, by deleting the indicator “number of printed materials” due to environmental considerations. The proposal was accepted by the MA, with the reservation that all indicators will be harmonized with the Communication Strategy.

The item “Internet” to be included in the part related to the electronic media (comment made by Ms. Zornitsa Angelova from the State Agency on Information Technologies and Communications). The comment was accepted by the MA.

The entire text of the Communication Plan of Operational programme “Environment 2007-2013” was subjected to voting. The document was adopted unanimously with the accepted proposals for revision.

In conclusion **Mr. Carsten Razmussen** shared his opinion that the great number of comments on the part of the committee members is a good sign for their commitment. He underlined that after adoption of the official documents the committee as a monitoring body should concentrate on the calls for proposals – shall see to the transparency and equal treatment during the procedures.

He thanked for receiving the documents in English but also appealed from now on the documents to be sent in time. Mr. Razmussen underlined the importance of the regularity, systematic planning and efficient use of the financial resources, which are limited.

Mr. Razmussen concluded that the beginning is set and the efforts shall continue to take out Bulgaria from the list of problematic countries.

Ms. Dobrinka Krasteva, MF, took the floor and on behalf of the National Coordinator wished to the Monitoring Committee as soon as possible to review already approved projects. She underlined that the directorates at the Ministry of Finance are open to provide assistance and consultations.

Mr. Richard Masa shared his positive impressions from the 5-year work with the Bulgarian MOEW, MF and the municipalities and informed the participants that his work in Bulgaria finishes on 31 March 2008. He expressed his hope that he had been useful with his experience and had assisted for strengthening the capacity of the Bulgarian partners.

Mr. Chavdar Georgiev thanked the participants for the good work and their activity when discussing the documents. He expressed his gratitude to the EC representatives for their comments and personally to Mr. Masa for the fruitful co-operation in the process of the mutual work and closed the meeting.

Official guests:

1. Mr. Plamen Oresharski – Minister of finance
2. Ms. Silvia Indjova – director of the „National fund” directorate, Ministry of finance
3. Ms. Iskra Mihailova – deputy minister of the regional development and public works
4. Ms. Ginka Chavdarova – executive director of the National association of municipalities in Bulgaria

From the Monitoring Committee:

Chairman:

1. Mr. Chavdar Georgiev – deputy minister of environment and water

Member and substitute:

2. Mr. Vasil Mragaritov – director of the „Cohesion policy for environment” directorate, MoEW
3. Mr. Dimitar Pehlivanov – a.h. of the „Monitoring and reporting” directorate, MoEW
4. Ms. Boyana Chavdarova, "Programming of the regional development", Ministry of the regional development and public works
5. Mr. Andrey Lalov, "Pre-accession programmes and projects" directorate, Ministry of economy and energy
6. Ms. Neli Yordanova, “Coordination of programme and projects” directorate, Ministry of transport
7. Ms. Galina Mihailova, head of the „Technical support” directorate, Ministry of finance
8. Ms. Zornitsa Rusinova, “Management of programme and projects" directorate, Ministry of State Administration and Administrative reform
9. Ms. Diana Zaharieva, Executive agency for fishery, Ministry of Agriculture and forestry
10. Mr. Dragomir Konstantinov, “National development plan”, Agency for economic analyses and forecasts, Ministry of finance
11. Ms. Boryana Pencheva, director of “Management of the EU funds” directorate, Ministry of finance
12. Ms. Dobrinka Krasteva, “Management of EU funds” directorate, Ministry of finance
13. Ms. Nina Kirilova, “Auditing of EU funds” directorate, Ministry of finance
14. Ms. Lilyana Pavlova – “National fund” directorate, Ministry of finance
15. Ms. Shinka Marinova - director of the „EU funds for environment” directorate, MoEW
16. Ms. Albena Boneva - „EU funds for environment” directorate, MoEW
17. Ms. Ivet Baeva - “Economical and social policy” directorate, Council of ministers
18. Ms. Lora Dimitrova - “Economical and social policy” Department, Council of ministers
19. Mr. Hristo Yovkov - “Strategic management and planning”, Counsel of ministers
20. Mr. Tsvetan Vladikov - “Coordination for EU affairs and international financial institutions”, Council of Ministers
21. Mr. Georgi Ivanov – “Water” directorate, MoEW
22. Mr. Georgi Terzov – “Water” directorate, MoEW

23. Ms. Maria Ninova - director of the „Waste management” directorate, MoEW
24. Ms. Rumyana Ilieva – “Waste management” directorate, MoEW
25. Ms. Vanya Grigorova - director of the „Preventive activities” directorate, MoEW
26. Ms. Jaclin Metodieva - „Preventive activities” directorate, MoEW
27. Ms. Asya Doneva - „National nature protection service” directorate, MoEW
28. Mr. Stoyan Vergiev - „National nature protection service” directorate, MoEW
29. Mr. Valeri Trendafilov - MoEW
30. Ms. Mariana Ilieva - MoEW
31. Ms. Ganya Hristova - „SCEUAIC” directorate, MoEW
32. Ms. Neli Ilieva - „SCEUAIC” directorate, MoEW
33. Ms. Tsvetana Brachkova - “Monitoring of environment”, Executive agency for environment
34. Mr. Sasho Angelov – advisor to the minister of health, Ministry of health
35. Ms. Snejana Altankova – „ Social health” directorate, Ministry of health
36. Mr. Petar Petrov – National service “Police”, Ministry of interior
37. Mr. Ivo Savov – National service “Police”, Ministry of interior
38. Ms. Zornitsa Angelova – State agency for information technology and communication
39. Ms. Kalina Dimitrova - State agency for information technology and communication
40. Mr. Rumén Ruménov – National Statistical Institute
41. Ms. Desislava Mihalkova – “Tourist policy” Department, State agency for tourism
42. Ms. Iva Yakimova - “Tourist policy” Department, State agency for tourism
43. Mr. Dimitar Sirakov – Bulgarian Academy of sciences
44. Mr. Nesho Chipev – Bulgarian Academy of sciences
45. Ms. Lilia Zamfirova – deputy regional governor of region Vratsa, Regional council for development of NWR planning region
46. Mr. Krum Krumov - deputy regional governor of region Montana, Regional council for development of NWR planning region
47. Ms. Maria Dimova - regional governor of region Ruse, Regional council for development of NCR planning region
48. Mr. Nikolay Nikolov – a.h. regional governor of region Shumen, Regional council for development of NIR planning region
49. Ms. Katya Doycheva – Mayer of municipality Tvurdica, Regional council for development of SIR planning region
50. Mr. Petko Arnaudov - Mayer of municipality Carevo, Regional council for development of SIR planning region
51. Mr. Petar Fidanov - regional governor of region Smolyan, Regional council for development of SCR planning region
52. Ms. Sonya Dobрева - Mayer of municipality Dragoman, Regional council for development of SWR for planning
53. Mr. Ivan Kokalov – Confederation of independent trade unions in Bulgaria (CITUB)
54. Ms. Svetla Karova - Confederation of independent trade unions in Bulgaria (CITUB)
55. Mr. Alexander Zagorov – Confederation of labour “Podkrepa”
56. Mr. Kiril Binev - Confederation of labour “Podkrepa”
57. Mr. Valentin Yovev – Alliance “Promyana”
58. Mr. Dimitar Brankov – Bulgarian industrial association
59. Ms. Mariana Stefanova – Bulgarian chamber of commerce and industry
60. Mr. Merko Yankulov – Alliance of industry enterprise
61. Ms. Svetlana Boyanova – legal advisor, Confederation of employers and industrialists in Bulgaria

62. Mr. Iliya Keleshev – Bulgarian industry capital association (BICA)
63. Mr. Botyo Tabakov – president of the standing committee “Environment, health and safety”, Bulgarian chamber of mining and geology
64. Mr. Georgy Tinchev – director of directorate “Forestry and environmental protection”, Council of ministry, State agency of forestry

Observers:

65. Mr. Harald Schoelzel – European investment bank
66. Mr. Jean-Marc Arnoux – European investment bank
67. Mr. Renaldo Mandmets – DG “Regional policy”, European commission
68. Mr. Richard Masa - DG “Regional policy”, European commission
69. Mr. Carsten Rasmussen – DG “Regional policy”, European commission
70. Ms. Milena Novakova – DG “Environment”, European commission
71. Ms. Katerina Rakovska – “World fund for wild nature”, Foundation “BlueLink”
72. Mr. Konstantin Georgiev – Alliance of the united NGO “Vitosha - 2002”
73. Mr. Krasimir Kocev – National council of disabled people
74. Mr. Vasil Dolapchiev – National council of disabled people
75. Mr. Ivo Kacarov – Directorate “Monitoring, analysis and methodology of public procurement”, Public procurement agency
76. Mr. Todor Yankulov – on behalf of Ms. Dilyanka Jelezarova, Department “Audit of EU funds”, Ministry of Finance
77. Ms. Tatyana Petkova – advisor to the Minister of environment and water

Representatives, acting in stead of the Committee, without decisive votes:

1. Mr. Hristo Yordanov – on behalf of of Krasimir Popov, Ministry of labour and social policy
2. Mr. Kiril Evtimov – on behalf of Ms. Rozalina Laskova, Directorate”Projects and programs management”, Ministry of state administration and administrative reform
3. Ms. Snejana Tsankova – on behalf of Ms. Mincho Kazandziev, Major of municipality Lovech, National association of municipalities in Bulgaria
4. Ms. Marta Bojikova – on behalf of Mr. Slavcho Atanasov, Major of municipality Plovdiv, National association of municipalities in Bulgaria
5. Ms. Yonka Marinova Stefanova – on behalf of Mr. Nikolay Sidzimov, Bulgarian association of municipal environmental experts
6. Ms. Rositsa Savova – on behalf of Mr. Emil Ivanov, regional administration Sofia, Regional council for development of SWR for planning
7. Ms. Ulyana Rizova – on behalf of Mr. Emil Ivanov, regional administration Sofia, Regional council for development of SWR for planning

Approved by:.....


/Mr. Chavdar Georgiev – Deputy Minister and Chairman of the Monitoring Committee of OP “Environment”
2007-2013” /

11 February 2008