

Current Status of the Navigation Channel Route

1. In accordance with the Permits issued by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine, the scope of dredging operations, completed for the Phase 1 of the Danube-Black Sea Navigation Route Reopening Project, is as follows:

1. River-bound excavations: 1,327,570 m³ of soil material,
2. Sea-bound excavations: 1,686,841 m³ of soil material.

As of 01.10.2005, all dredging operations under the Phase 1 of the Danube-Black Sea Navigation Route Reopening Project were suspended along the whole navigation channel route.

The channel widths, currently achieved in some river-bound sections of the navigation channel, are below the design values. These sections are located along the Ukrainian/Romanian border, and the dredging operations have been suspended pending the consent to be issued by the State Border Service of Ukraine.

All dredging operations in the sandbar area have been suspended after the completion of dredging plan specified for the Project Phase 1.

The length of completed section of protection dam is about 360 m (see Annex 23), or 1/3 of the Phase 1 design length.

2. The slow-moving cold front, developed over the Danube Basin in mid-July, caused heavy and intensive rainfalls, especially in the Lower Danube Basin, where the rainfall intensity was as high as that of an spontaneous hydrometeorological event (EHE). For example, the total daily rainfall of 161.2 mm was recorded in Reni on 12 July 2005, which was more than three times the normal monthly precipitation for July (51 mm). This was the heaviest rainfall recorded in the Ukrainian part of the Danube Basin for the whole 60-year period of hydrometeorological observations since 1945.

Heavy rainfall had caused steep rise in water levels in the Lower Danube and its tributaries. For instance, the water levels in the Siret River (near Lungoch) had risen by nearly 7 m within a span of 2 days. Near Reni, the rate of increase in water levels was as high as 38 cm per day, resulting in the total increase of about 1.5 m.

During the flood induced by heavy rainfall, water turbidity in the Ukrainian part of the Danube Basin significantly increased up to 1000-1200 g/m³, representing a 3-4-fold increase relative to turbidity levels recorded during the 2005 spring/summer high flow period. The rate of discharge of suspended solids, carried with river flow through the Bystre Branch, ranged between 1600 to 2200 kg/s. The total daily load of suspended solids carried with river flow through the Bystre Branch was as high as 190,000 tonnes per day, resulting in the intensive build-up of silt in the seaward access channel. This extreme flooding event has led to the loss of navigation depths and additional dredging requirement.

The data on the volumes of silt deposited in the seaward access channel are provided below:

- From 19.10.04 through 22.04.05: 580,000 m³;
- From 22.04.05 through 08.09.05: 526,000 m³.