

The Renova Foundation intensifies its actions for the rainy season

Command Centers will be installed along the Doce River for orientation regarding necessary measures

The Renova Foundation has elaborated an action plan for the rainy season in order to mitigate the effects of the rain during the coming months. The plan consists of preventive and contingency measures to minimize the impacts on society, the environment and the economic activities of the locations impacted by the collapse of the Fundão dam. The document has been shared with environmental organizations, Public Authorities and Civil Defense, reinforcing the Institute's commitment to act in a transparent, responsible and safe manner. Suggestions of improvement have been received to continuously refine the plan.

The preventive measures related to the public supply will be finalized coming November. At the locations that withdraw water from the Doce River, the preventive actions considered improvements to the water treatment plants (ETAs), workshops with the technicians that operate the plants and the implementation of alternative collections, with the drilling of artesian wells and the installation of water pipelines.

At the same time, the water quality is being monitored permanently, with the release of lab reports and making the results available to the society, the regulating agencies and the public authorities. The water of the Doce River is monitored at 92 points along the river and the marine areas close to the mouth - 28 points in the sea, 53 points in the river and 11 points in the tributaries. The communication with the several institutes representing the society is being intensified for the rainy season.

Command Centers

Between the actions in the implementation phase is the creation of the Command Centers, with special teams, whose activities will start coming November. The centers will communicate directly with, and be subordinate to the local Civil Defense and environmental organizations and will have the objective to manage the plan for the rainy season. This action model allows the society to follow the notifications and actions in a better way, establishing an integrated command and enabling agile decision-making. The central base will be in Mariana and three regional ones will be installed in Barra Longa, Governador Valadares and Colatina.

Public supply

The preventive measures for the rainy season are being intensified by the Renova Foundation with the recommendations from specialists. Since the last rainy season, water treatment plants (ETAs), located along the Doce River, have received improvements carried out by Samarco. With the beginning of the rainfalls this year, new interventions were defined which are already being implemented in the ETAs

considered priority, like the replacements of equipments, piping, valves and improvements to the automation system.

Besides the improvements to the existing ETAs, the installation of two new ETAs is planned - one modular in Cachoeira Escura, District of Belo Oriente, and one mobile ETA in Regência. It was determined that at some of the locations the ETAs already have the proper infrastructure for the treatment of the most diverse levels of turbidity.

At the locations where there was no alternative for the withdrawal from the Doce River, the actions focused on the installation of wells and water pipelines for emergency water collection in case the increase of turbidity makes the proper water treatment at the ETAs impossible. Since the end of last year, 18 wells have been drilled and new water pipelines have been installed, which are ready for use.

New wells are being installed by November. The municipality of Governador Valadares (MG) will also have a new water pipeline, whose project is in the development phase.

In order to increase the reliability of the water treatment process, workshops are being held to exchange experiences and good practice with the operators that work in all the ETAs that withdraw water from the Doce River. The result is the creation of operational procedures in cooperation with the operators of the Plants.

In the Mariana and Barra Longa region the mapping of rural and urban properties with a flooding history was completed, ensuring to offer all the appropriate guidelines and support in lines with Civil Defense. Maintenance is being performed on roads and streets and alternative accesses are being checked for allowing appropriate transportation, as well as fencing for protecting animals and transferring those in risk areas.

Moreover, in Barra Longa, bottlenecks in the river are being removed to improve the water flow and reduce the risk of flooding. A wall is being added to the Gesteira church and the construction of another water treatment plant is being negotiated to keep the flooding risk under control and to avoid that the town's water supply gets affected.

Recovery

The recovery of the Doce River is a long term process. Works are planned and in progress for the next ten years for the restoration of the natural characteristics of the rivers and their surroundings. The efforts taken so far do already present results and we can observe that, in large areas, the rivers have gone back to the parameters before the dam collapse, in relation to the turbidity as well as the water quality, according the report of the State Water Management Institute of Minas Gerais (IGAM), published in August this year.

Water quality

Since the collapse of the Fundão dam, several measures have been taken to minimize the effects on the water quality, among others, the revegetation of about 800 hectares, the constructions of structures by Samarco for the containment of sediments and additional measures for reducing the movement of tailings through the channels of the Doce River. The movement of tailings to the Doce River can increase the turbidity above the historical levels of the river and, depending on the volume, cause impacts to the Water Treatment Plants (ETAs).

With the works that have been done over the last months, the expectation is that a lot less material will be deposited in the Doce River during this rainy season, in comparison to last year.

The monitoring of the Doce river water considers aspects like the physical chemical quality of the water, the sediments and the tailings, eco toxicological tests and drinkability tests according the parameters of decree 2914/11 of the Ministry of Health. All the labs are licensed by INMETRO.

During the rainy season, the water samples are being collected regularly along the Doce River in order to monitor if the water is suitable and within the standards established by the relevant bodies. The information will be reported to the authorities in order to take actions related to imminent risks.

Emergency revegetation

The revegetation, as well as the reformation of the impacted areas are emergency measures that complied their objectives. The final solutions, in progress, are supported by projects for controlling the erosion, bioengineering and recovery of the native vegetation.

The Renova Foundation

The Renova Foundation is an autonomous and independent institute founded to repair the damage caused by the collapse of the Fundão dam, located in Mariana (MG). A private non-profit organization, created to guarantee transparency, legitimacy and a sense of urgency of a complex and long term process. The Foundation was established by means of the Transaction and Conduct Adjustment Term (TTAC), signed between Samarco, its shareholders, the federal government and the state governments of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, as well as several of authorities, foundations and institutes (like Ibama, the Chico Mendes Institute, the National Water Agency, the State Forestry Institute, Funai, among others), in March 2016.