

The UNECE/WHO-EURO Protocol on Water and Health:

**where health, environment
and development policies meet**

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Why a treaty to manage water resources and prevent water-related diseases ?

- In the European Region, poor-quality drinking-water causes over 13 000 deaths from diarrhoea among children aged 0–14 years (5.3% of all deaths in this age group) each year
- 140 million (16%) do not have a household connection to a drinking-water supply, 85 million (10%) do not have improved sanitation; the situation had not improved in the past 15 years
- In central and eastern Europe water is safe only in 30—40% of households.
- Emerging threats: protozoan infestations of drinking-water supply systems, proliferation of *Legionella*, and potential health problems related to the increasingly complex chemical environment
- Overuse, pollution, extreme weather events affect water resources

The Protocol on Water and Health

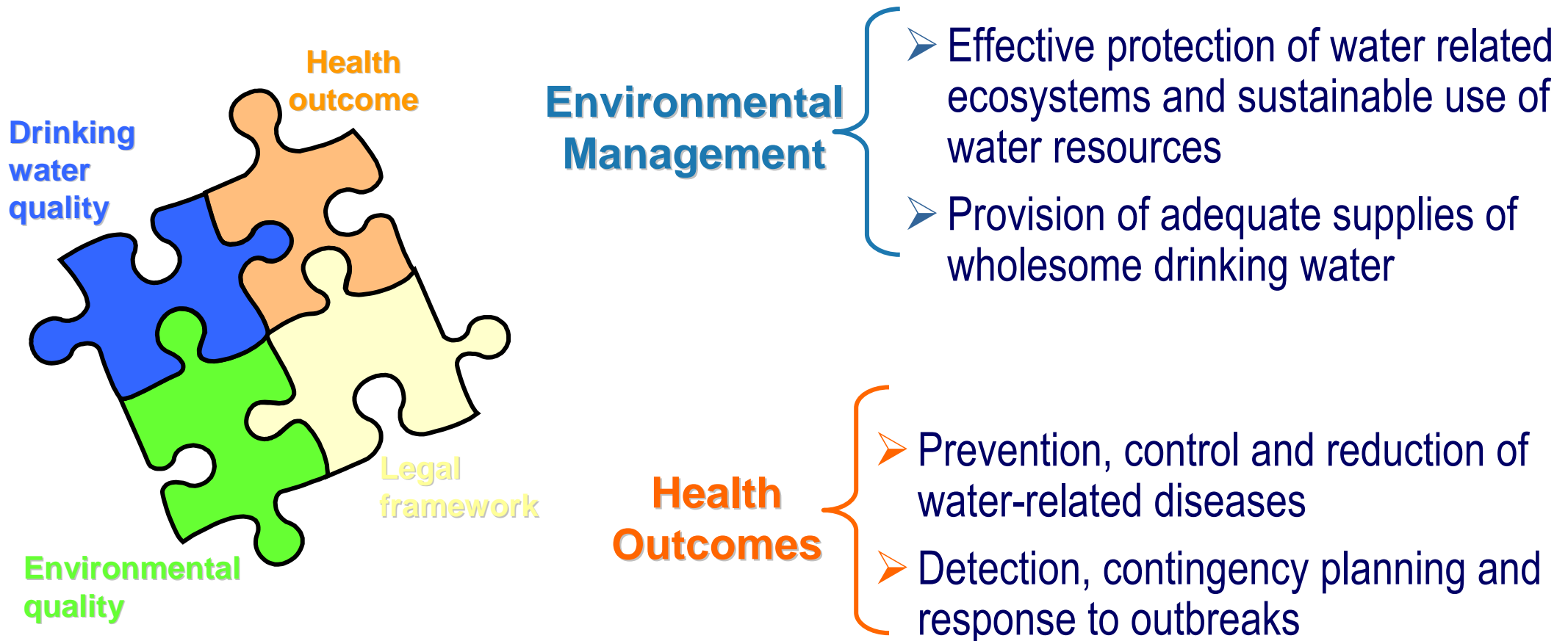
UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE



The world's only legal treaty designed to reduce water-related deaths and diseases through improved water management

Aim: Protect human health and well being by better management of water resources



Objectives

(a) Access to drinking water for everyone and

(b) Provision of sanitation for everyone

=> Focus on sustainable development and MDGs,
beyond MDG 7, target 10

=> framework for implementing the human
right to water and poverty reduction

=> focus on governance, integration of policies and
on cooperation

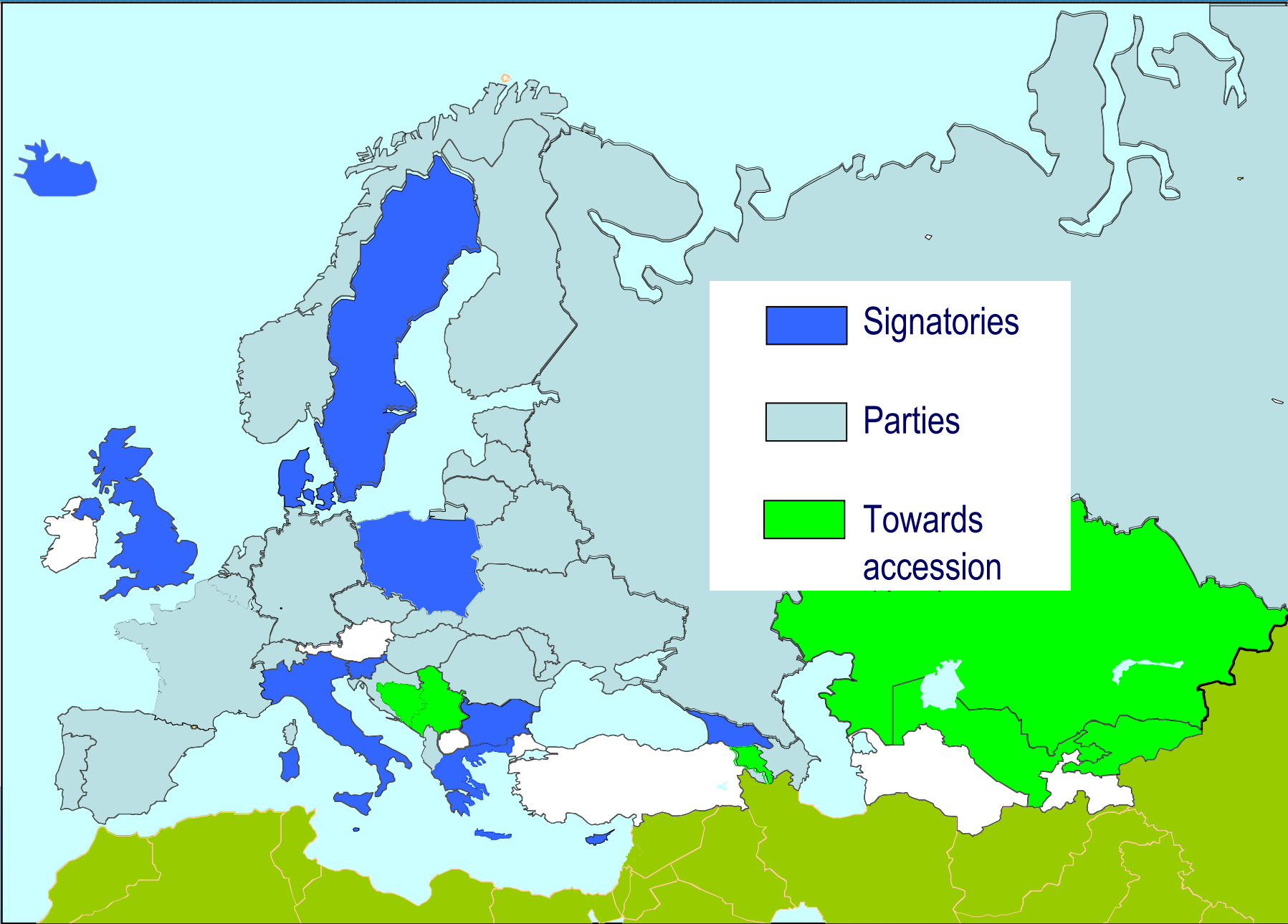


Status of ratification

Adopted in
1999 by 36
countries

Entered into
force in 2005

Currently
ratified by 24
countries



Scope

**Costal and
estuarine
waters**



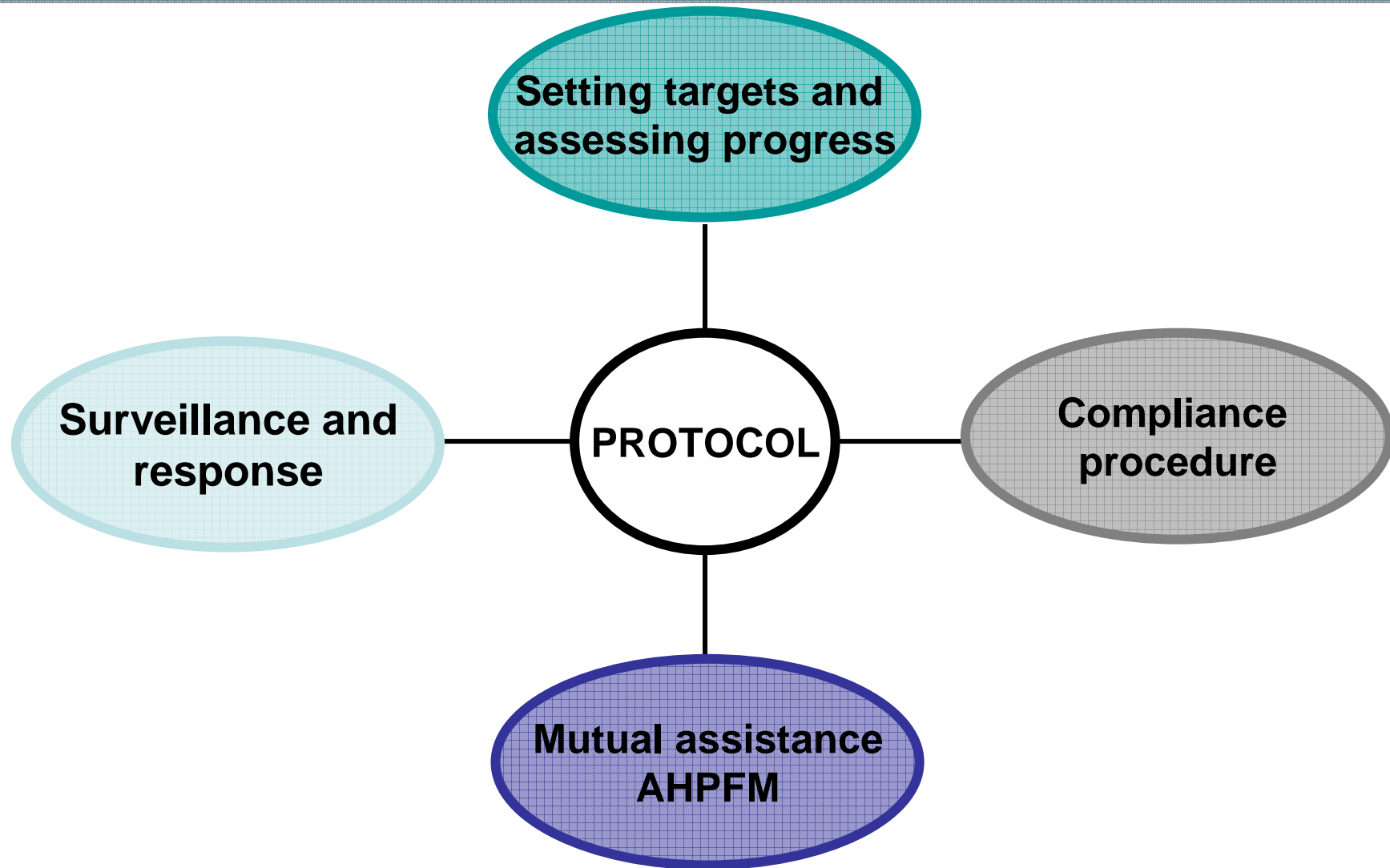
**Surface
waters**

**Water
during
abstraction,
transport,
treatment
and supply**



**Wastewater
collection,
transport,
treatment,
discharge,
reuse**

How: the Protocol's pillars



Art 6 and 7: Targets, measures, review of progress

ESTABLISH TARGETS

Within 2 years of becoming a Party, each Party shall set targets and target dates

- Water supply and sanitation
- Water management
- Health protection

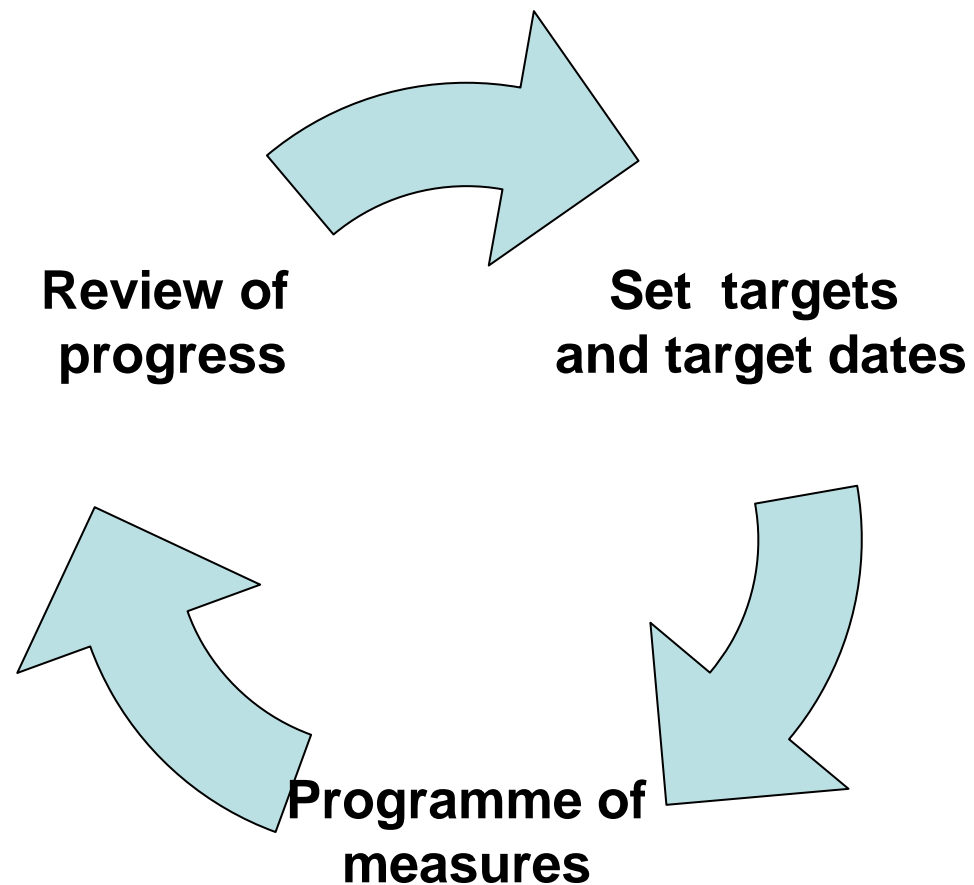
MEASURES

- National coordination mechanism
- Water management plans
- Investments
- Monitoring
- Enforcement
- Capacity building

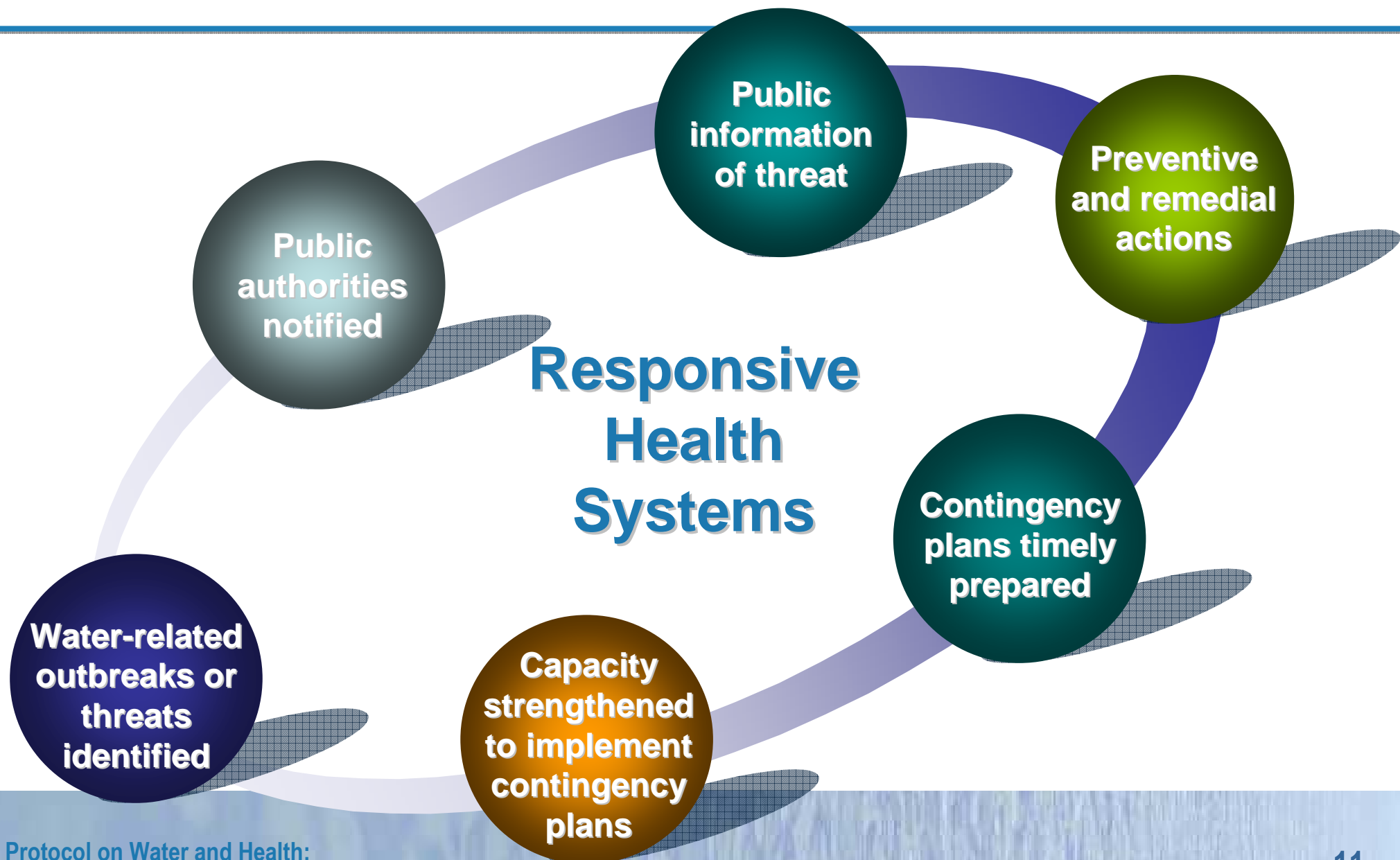
REVIEW PROGRESS

- Collect and evaluate data
- Publish results
- Review progress
- Submit summary report

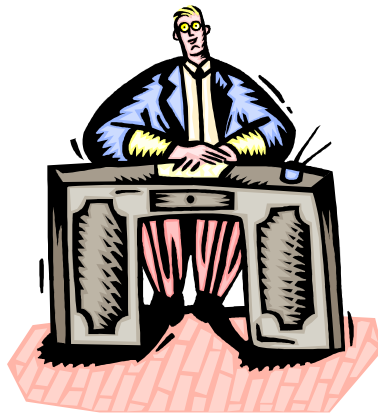
Progressive and continuous action



Surveillance and response



Assistance tools



Compliance
Committee



Project Facilitation
Mechanism

Public awareness, education and public participation

Parties shall

- Ensure public participation in decision making (target setting)
- Take steps to enhance public awareness
- Promote common understanding between sectors
- Encourage education and training
- Ensure that information is available to the public

International cooperation

Parties shall cooperate and assist each other to implement the Protocol:

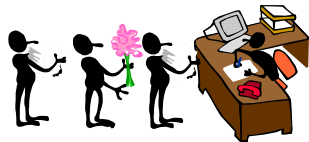
- Coordinated international action (harmonization of targets, indicators, surveillance systems, etc)
- Cooperation on transboundary waters
- International support for national action

=> Project Facilitation Mechanism:

Improved formulation of projects, coordination of donor action, matching of needs and assistance

How does the Protocol function?

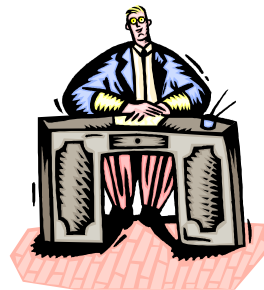
Meeting of the Parties (MOP)



Compliance Committee



Project Facilitation Mechanism



Bureau



- Task Force Surveillance
- Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting

Working Group on Water and Health



Joint Secretariat WHO – UNECE

In practice... technical guidance

- From the what to the how for a common approach in the region
- Theoretical and technical framework for compliance with main obligations
- Guidelines on setting targets, evaluation of progress and reporting; technical and policy guidance on surveillance

In practice... emerging (ed) issues

- Small scale water supplies
- Water supply and sanitation in extreme weather events
- Equitable access to water / implementation of the human right to water and sanitation

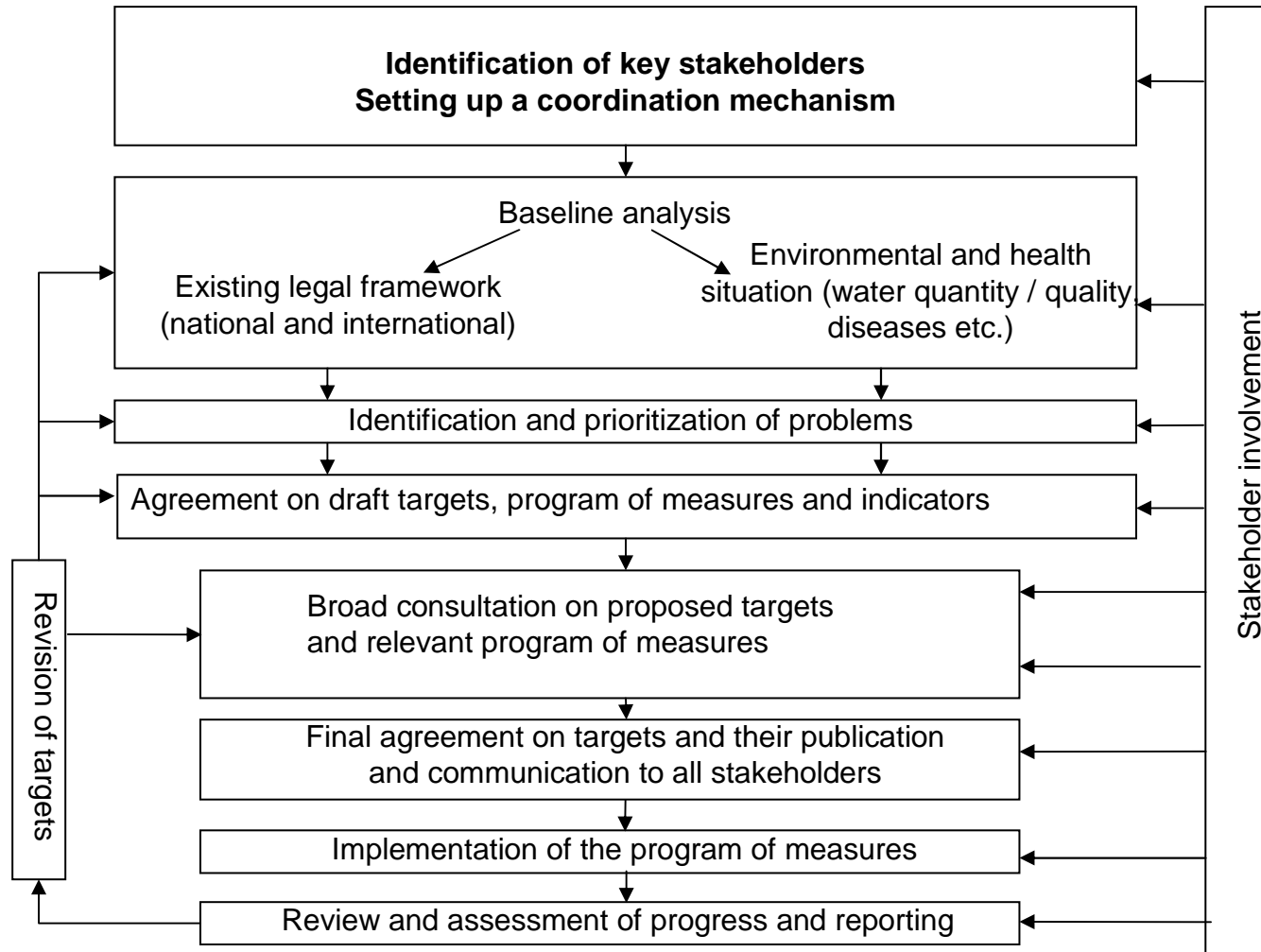
In practice... capacity building

- On different aspects of the Protocol's implementation
- Focus on South-Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
- Supported by other activities and feeds back to work under the Protocol

In practice... country projects

- Finalized in Moldova and in Ukraine, starting in other countries, including Kyrgyzstan
- Requests for others
- Link to activities carried out within the National Policy Dialogues on IWRM under the EU Water Initiative

In practice at the national level: process of setting targets



Key stakeholders and coordination of activities: example of Moldova

- Main responsibilities: Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Health
- Coordination through Steering Committee (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment, Water Management Agency “Apele Moldovei”, Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Association of DWSSS operators “Moldova Apa-Canal”, NGOs) – with ToR and mandate formalized by inter-ministerial Order
- Baseline analysis (legal/environment/health) conducted by local experts/consultants
- NGOs input coordinated and provided by Eco-Tiras
- Broad consultation on proposed targets through national stakeholders meetings

Targets set

- Reduction of % of samples that do not comply with standards for E coli and entorococi in drinking water: in cities max 5% non-compliance by 2015, and max 3% non-compliance by 2020, in rural areas max 10% non-compliance by 2015 and max 7% non-compliance by 2020
- Maintain a zero level of incidence of cholera and typhoid
- Increase the access of children in schools and pre-school institutions to improved water supply sources
- Operators of collective systems of water supply and sanitation are able to respond to extreme weather events and large-scale emergency situations in place: 2 operators by 2015, 5 by 2020
- Increase of % of population with access to improved sanitation systems from 50% in 2010 to 65% in 2015
- Construction of 4 new municipal waste water treatment plants by 2017
- Norms for the reuse of wastewater from treatment plants for irrigation purposes in place by 2015

Challenges

- Difficulty of the problems => complexity of the solution
- Integration: the beauty of the Protocol and its curse: cooperation among all involved not always easy; cooperation between governmental authorities and NGOs
- Win inertia of traditional/sectoral approach=> Still weak recognition of the linkages between environment and public health
- Difficulties in getting high political attention
- Financial implications vs underfunding of the water sector
- => Requires political commitment but is also a powerful framework to generate it

Main advantages

- Legally binding => ensures long-term commitment and forms a basis for improved regulatory environment
- Designed to support continuous progress with pace and objectives tailored to countries' priorities and capacities
- Programme of work supports implementation and harmonization in the region as well as a framework for dealing with emerging issues
- Offers a structured environment for government, NGOs and business to develop long-term cooperation at national and international level

What's next

- Programme of work for 2011-2013
 - Exchange of experience at sub-regional level
 - Work on small scale water supply and sanitation
 - Access to information and public participation
 - Right to water
 - Capacity building activities
 - Projects in country

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

<http://www.unece.org/env/water/welcome.html>