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**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

Fifth session
Geneva, 10–12 November 2009
Items 5 and 7 of the provisional agenda

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND RELATED ECOSYSTEMS

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS

FUTURE PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS UNDER THE CONVENTION

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document presents the aims, structure and organizational details of the proposed new programme of pilot projects under the Convention as well as its support structure. It also includes a proposal for a decision by the Meeting of the Parties on these matters. The future programme of pilot projects was discussed by the second meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (Geneva, 24 April 2009), the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment at its tenth meeting (Bratislava, 10–11 June 2009) and by the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management at its fourth meeting (Geneva, 8–9 July 2009) which requested to submit this document to the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

I. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSED ACTION BY THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

1. Both the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment have stressed that future work under the Convention should focus on implementation and projects on the ground. They have also emphasized that the positive experience with the “first generation” of pilot project on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, mostly implemented in the late 1990s to the early 2000s under the Convention, should be repeated. The decision by the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute to host the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) – the Convention’s collaborative centre – until 2012 provides a good opportunity to do so.

2. This document is based on the outcomes of the second meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (Geneva, 24 April 2009) and has been discussed by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment at its tenth meeting (Bratislava, 10–11 June 2009) and by the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management at its fourth meeting (Geneva, 8–9 July 2009). The two groups agreed that a programme of pilot projects should be included in the draft workplan for 2010–2012 under the Convention and requested that this document be submitted to the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (see ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2009/2 and ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2009/2).

3. The Meeting of the Parties may wish:

(a) To discuss the proposed programme of pilot projects, including its support structure, and to agree to include it in the Convention’s workplan for 2010–2012;

(b) To invite countries sharing transboundary basins in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region to submit proposals for pilot projects by the end of 2009;

(c) To invite Parties and other partners to support the implementation of the programme of pilot projects by providing expertise and financial resources;

(d) To entrust the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management to oversee implementation of the programme, and the Task Force on Water and Climate to guide and facilitate implementation of pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change.

II. RATIONALE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS

4. In recent years, a number of guideline documents have been elaborated under the Convention. The most recent are the *Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management* (ECE/MP.WAT/22), the *Strategies on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* (ECE/MP.WAT/20) and the *Model Provisions for Transboundary Flood Risk Management* (ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.1). All

were adopted at the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Bonn, Germany, 20–22 November 2006). In addition, the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change currently being developed under the joint leadership of the Netherlands and Germany is expected to be adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at their fifth session. By adopting these guidelines, the Parties commit themselves to implementing them in their transboundary water cooperation.

5. To ensure an early and effective implementation of the guidance documents developed under the Convention, capacity-building and – above all – pilot projects are needed. For this reason, several pilot projects have been developed since 1996 to put into practice the set of guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters, under the leadership of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment. The proposed new programme of pilot projects should take into account lessons learned from these past and already completed pilot projects.

6. The need to consider monitoring and assessment in the broader context of integrated water resources management (IWRM) calls for widening the original focus of the pilot programme on monitoring and assessment. Furthermore, the scope of pilot projects should, as much as possible, become basin-wide, rather than be limited to a single component of the basin, such as a river, lake or groundwater.

7. The countries in the UNECE region, especially countries with economies in transition in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South Eastern Europe (SEE) are generally experiencing difficulties with applying IWRM. In addition, very few countries in the region have developed climate change adaptation strategies thus far and even less has been done at the transboundary level. Similarly, although the *Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management* is recognized as a useful tool, the level of implementation has been limited so far.

8. Implementing the new guidance documents is likewise a demanding and challenging undertaking for the countries involved. Several meetings have called for the development of a new programme of pilot projects to promote implementation of the Convention on the ground. These include: (a) the ninth and tenth meetings of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva, 17–18 June 2008 and Bratislava, 10–11 June 2009, respectively); (b) the third and fourth meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (Rome, 22–24 October 2008 and Geneva, 8–9 July 2009, respectively); (c) the Conference “Climate Change Adaptation and Water – the need for a stronger Cooperation in Europe” (Brussels, 12–13 March 2009); (d) the workshop on transboundary flood risk management (Geneva, 22–23 April 2009); and (e) the second meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (Geneva, 24 April 2009).

9. To help countries implement IWRM in the transboundary context and the guidance documents developed under the Convention in particular, a new programme of pilot projects has been proposed.

10. A main advantage of establishing such a programme under the Convention is that it will help to apply the broad knowledge acquired under the Convention, will facilitate the exchange of

experience between basins and projects, and will promote good practices and lessons learned throughout the whole UNECE region.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS

11. The central objective of the programme of pilot projects is to support UNECE countries and specifically countries with economies in transition (in EECCA as well as SEE) in their efforts to improve IWRM in the transboundary context.

12. In particular, the programme will focus on three main areas:

(a) Water and adaptation to climate change in the transboundary context, including management of floods and droughts;

(b) Joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, including data management and information exchange;

(c) Implementation of payments for ecosystem services to support IWRM.

13. In these three areas, the programme will aim:

(a) To assist UNECE countries in implementing the Convention, thereby also supporting implementation of the European Union Water Framework Directive (EU WFD)¹;

(b) To create positive examples demonstrating the benefits of and possible mechanisms for transboundary cooperation regarding adaptation to climate change in the water sector, monitoring and assessment, data management and information exchange, as well as payments for ecosystem services;

(c) To provide a forum for exchanging experience, good practices and lessons learned in different parts of the UNECE region;

(d) To support the implementation of the guidance documents developed under the Convention, in particular:

(i) The draft Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change (ECE/MP.WAT/30), expected to be adopted by the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties in November 2009);

(ii) The Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood Risk Management, adopted at the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.1);

¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000, establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

(iii) The Guidelines and Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters, adopted at the second and fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties²;

(iv) The *Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management*, adopted at the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.WAT/22).

IV. FOCUS OF PILOT PROJECTS

14. The pilot projects should as much as possible be developed and implemented in the transboundary context. As far as possible, surface and groundwaters should be integrated.

15. Although the main focus of the pilot projects programme will be on EECCA and SEE, it is expected that pilot projects will be set up also in EU countries or in basins shared by EU and non-EU countries. Exchange of experience between EU and non-EU countries should be promoted (see chapters VIII and IX).

16. Neighbouring non-UNECE countries may participate in the projects. Depending on the basin size or other factors, pilot projects might cover only parts of river basins.

17. The specific focus and objectives of each pilot project will be defined jointly by the riparian countries to the basin concerned. Depending on the level of advancement and previous relevant activities in the basin the pilot projects may focus on different components proposed in the guidance documents.

18. For example, pilot projects focusing on climate change adaptation will address different steps of the guidance and of the development of an adaptation strategy, depending on the levels of awareness, progress and cooperation in the basin as well as data availability and previous work done on climate change (from creating the enabling environment, development of the knowledge base – joint development of scenarios and vulnerability assessments – to the joint planning of a package of adaptation measures).

19. In most cases, pilot projects will mainly focus on developing strategies that lay the groundwork for further action. Therefore in the first stage, pilot projects will focus on planning (e.g. of adaptation strategies) and not on the funding and implementation of the relevant measures.

V. PROCEDURES FOR STARTING PILOT PROJECTS

20. Responsibility for the implementation of individual pilot projects will rest with the countries concerned, which will have full ownership of them.

² Available at: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub74.htm>.

21. Upon request by riparian countries (Parties and non-Parties to the Convention), projects will be developed on specific river basins. If interested, countries (preferably all riparian countries) should send, by December 2009, a short (maximum of 10 pages) project proposal to the UNECE secretariat (water.convention@unece.org) using the pilot project proposal form (see annex). Neighbouring countries should as far as possible prepare joint proposals or at least consult with their neighbours before submitting a proposal. Where available, joint bodies might be the most appropriate venue to discuss, plan and implement such pilot projects, in close consultation with the riparian countries.

22. A firm commitment by all riparian countries to participate in the pilot projects should be a prerequisite. Such commitment will need to be expressed in a formalized way (e.g. by a letter of intent by a minister, or the signing of a memorandum of understanding) before the start of the pilot project.

23. The following countries and organizations expressed their interest in participating in pilot projects: the secretariat of the Sava River Basin Commission, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, which requested the inclusion of a component on climate change adaptation in the ongoing project on the Dniester River, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which expressed interest in a pilot project on the Chu Talas River. Such interest will need to be reconfirmed formally by the different riparian countries.

24. Pilot projects on joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, including data management and information exchange, should be implemented through a project submitted for funding to the French Global Environment Facility (French GEF). The overall aim of the project, to be implemented in two basins in EECCA countries, is to build capacity in data administration within the main national and regional authorities concerned with transboundary water management. Through developing and sharing information, this will provide support for transboundary water resource management policies and action. The project proposal to the French GEF was accepted in a pre-selection phase.³

VI. TIME FRAME

25. The duration of the pilot projects will vary from basin to basin depending on the focus of the project, the available resources, the countries involved, etc. Most projects are expected to last between two and four years.

26. For the pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change, the following indicative time frame can be envisaged:

Up to the end of 2009	Project proposals: expressions of interest by riparian countries and submissions of application
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³ See also the document “Strengthening capacity for data administration and exchange for monitoring and assessment of transboundary water resources in EECCA: proposal for a pilot activity” (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/12).

Up to September 2010	Project preparations: negotiations on the focus and modalities of pilot projects, exchange of formal letters or signing of memoranda of understanding.
Autumn 2010	Kick-off workshops for pilot projects, back-to-back with meetings of the Task Force on Water and Climate Change
Autumn 2010- Autumn 2012	Implementation of the pilot projects, exchanges of experience through website, newsletters and regular meetings. Annual meetings of all pilot projects back-to-back with meetings of the Task Force on Water and Climate Change
2010 and 2011	Discussion about ongoing pilot projects at the meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment
End of 2011	Mid-term review of ongoing pilot projects
Middle/end of 2012	Review of progress and of completed pilot projects at the meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, as well as at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention

VII. FUNDING FOR PILOT PROJECTS

27. Funding requirements will vary between pilot projects and could range from few thousand United States dollars up to hundreds of thousands of dollars, depending on the economic development of the countries involved, the scope of the project, the nature of the basin, etc. Funding of pilot projects from several sources can be envisaged, as follows:

(a) Some pilot projects can be totally funded through the national budgets and be self-sustaining, but some monetary transfer might be necessary between riparian countries in the basin;

(b) Some projects can rely on funding from existing or new international projects in which a climate change or another thematic component is included (e.g. projects funded by the European Commission, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank, and by bilateral donors, in particular Parties to the Convention);

(c) For some pilot projects, additional funding will be necessary. This funding may be raised through bilateral or multilateral assistance.

28. Fund-raising will be the primary responsibility of the countries involved. However, in particular for countries with economies in transition, IWAC, the Convention secretariat, and possibly the lead countries can assist the interested countries in finding financial resources to implement the projects.

29. The pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change will also be projects of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. This could include partial funding for a limited number of projects in countries with economies in transition.

30. Additional funding will also be needed for the coordination and support structure (see chapters VIII and IX below), for example for organizing the regular exchange of experience between the different pilot projects. Funding opportunities for this type of activities have to be sought.

VIII. MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS

31. The coordination and/or management of the programme of pilot projects will rely on existing bodies and processes. These bodies will be responsible for overseeing the programme, but not for implementing or fund-raising for pilot projects. The governance structure will be as follows:

(a) The Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management will be the main bodies responsible for reviewing progress under the programme of pilot projects;

(b) The pilot projects on adaptation to climate change will be facilitated by the Task Force on Water and Climate under the leadership of [the Netherlands and Germany, to be confirmed], in close cooperation with the European Commission, the Strategic Steering Group on Climate Change and Water and the Strategic Coordination Group for implementation of the EU WFD;

(c) The pilot projects programme on monitoring and assessment, data management and information exchange will be implemented by IWAC in accordance with the project agreement with the French GEF;

(d) The pilot projects on payments for ecosystem services will be facilitated by Switzerland, lead Party for this activity [to be confirmed].

32. Pending availability of resources, the pilot projects programme will be supported by IWAC and the Convention secretariat.

IX. OVERARCHING STRUCTURE FOR EXCHANGING EXPERIENCE

33. Exchange of experience, good practices and lessons learned is crucial for implementing effective pilot projects and the main added value of establishing pilot projects under the Convention. Depending on the number and focus of the pilot projects, such an exchange of experience can be organized between pilot projects concentrated on a specific thematic area.

34. In particular, with regard to climate change adaptation, exchanging good practices and lessons learned is especially essential for improving and enhancing effective action. This has been recognized by numerous international conferences such as the Conference “Climate Change Adaptation and Water—the need for a stronger cooperation in Europe” (Brussels, 12–13 March 2009), the fifth World Water Forum (Istanbul, Turkey, 16–22 March 2009) and the World Water Week 2009 in Stockholm (16–22 August 2009). Exchange of experience should also include as

much as possible adaptation projects and activities developed by other organizations and countries. This can for example be done by ensuring links with ongoing or planned initiatives such as the planned EU clearing house on adaptation, the activities under the Nairobi work programme⁴ of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), e.g. the Adaptation Practices Interface and other ongoing and new initiatives⁵. Connections with other ongoing activities could be established through joint or back-to-back meetings. The Task Force on Water and Climate would play an important role in this regard.

35. The continuous exchange of experience can be ensured through different means, for example:

- (a) Creation of a dedicated website with information about all pilot projects;
- (b) Creation of an internal website/wiki space for direct communication between different pilot areas;
- (c) Publication of a regular newsletter;
- (d) Organization of periodic (e.g. annual) face-to-face meetings between teams involved in the different projects;
- (e) Collection of good and bad practices regarding climate change adaptation with a special focus on the transboundary context;
- (f) Methodological studies or research on specific aspects of IWRM and climate change adaptation which are of interest to all or several of the pilot projects (e.g. linkages between adaptation and mitigation).

36. At the outset, once the pilot projects have been selected, an initial workshop could be organized to establish contacts between the different pilot regions, and to demonstrate some possible tools as well as the experiences of similar projects being pursued in the UNECE region and beyond.

X. PARTNERS

37. Partners to be involved in the programme of pilot projects will vary depending on the focus of the specific pilot projects.

38. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)⁶ and the other ENVSEC partners– the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC-CEE) – will actively cooperate in the design and implementation of pilot projects. Other partners for pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change may include

⁴ The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

⁵ See http://unfccc.int/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/items/3633.php

⁶ At the time of writing, UNDP was closely cooperating with UNECE on the development of a pilot project proposal for the Chu and Talas basins.

UNFCCC, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the EECCA Regional Environmental Centres, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate and the World Water Council.

39. Of crucial importance for pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change will be cooperation with the EU and in particular the European Commission. In fact, in the EU a White Paper on adaptation to climate change was published in April 2009⁷ that will be complemented by follow-up activities. Work is also ongoing on a guidance document focusing on how to implement the EU WFD and other EU water-related legislation under conditions of climate change⁸; this can be considered complementary to the Convention's Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change. In addition, pilot projects on water scarcity are currently in the planning stages. Cooperation between the EU and UNECE would therefore allow for creating the very much needed framework for continuous dialogue in the pan-European region on climate change adaptation, in line with the EU Neighbourhood Policy. Ideally, future pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change could be designed in such a way that they can both support implementation of both guidance documents and promote exchange of experience and cross-fertilization between EU and non-EU countries. Another option would be cooperation in the support structure, for example joint exchange of experience between the pilot projects, joint workshops, etc.

40. Partners for pilot projects on payments for ecosystem services might include UNDP, the Ramsar Convention secretariat, the UNECE Timber Committee, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNEP, OSCE, the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), WWF, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), GWP and the RECs.

⁷ White paper - Adapting to climate change: towards a European framework for action. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52009DC0147:EN:NOT>

⁸ Draft guidance on 'How to adapt to climate change with regard to water issues and EU water legislation' under development in the frame of EU Water Framework Directive Common Implementation Strategy at the time of writing.

Annex

**OUTLINE FOR PROPOSAL OF PILOT PROJECTS
UNDER THE CONVENTION**

1. Name of the basin or sub-basin:
2. Riparian countries:
3. Riparian countries to be involved in the pilot project:
4. Contact persons in all countries:
 - (a) Country 1:
 - (b) Country 2:
 - (c) Country 3:
5. Proposed focus of the pilot project (for example climate change adaptation, monitoring and assessment including data management and information exchange, payments for ecosystem services):
6. Proposed specific objective(s) of the pilot project:
7. General information about the basin:
 - (a) Geographic, climatic, hydrologic/hydrogeologic:
 - (b) Socio-economic:
 - (c) Political, including existing cooperation structures:
8. Background and rationale of the pilot projects (please explain why this pilot project would be needed in this basin, any existing activities in this area, etc.):

9. Major foreseen activities:

10. Envisaged implementation period:

11. Funding:

(a) Estimated funding requirements:

(b) Already available funding and relevant sources:

12. Possible partners in implementation:

Submitted by:

Name:

Title and organization:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

Contact person for further communication (if different from the submitting person):
