



12th MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL WATER POLICY DIALOGUE ON IWRM IN ARMENIA

Date: May 6, 2014

Location: "Regance" Hotel Complex, 10/1 Davit Anhaght Street, Yerevan

AGENDA

In the **opening session** Mr. Narimanyan, Chairman of the 12th Steering Committee (SC) meeting of NPD on IWRM in Armenia, welcomed the participants of the meeting, and presented the main points of the agenda. The SC members adopted the agenda as it was presented.

Opening statement was also made by Ms. Tatiana Efimova from OECD/EAP Task Force Secretariat, Mr. Alisher Mamadzhanov from UNECE and Mr. Karri Eloheimo from the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE).

Afterwards, Mr. Narimanyan summarized the status of NPD activities, and updated on recent development in water sector of Armenia. He particularly mentioned the initiative to revise the Water Code of Armenia to address the legal gaps identified during the last several years, issues related to recycled water use, initiative to introduce the ideas of economic guarantees, and process of revision of the National Water Program to provide more details on the water basin management plans.

Steering Committee members and participants of the meeting were asked to make reflections on recent developments. Ms. Zara Chatinyan from the German KfW Bank briefly mentioned about the investments by the Bank in water supply and sanitation sector of Armenia, which already amount to 150 mln Euro, and expressed readiness of the KfW Bank to finance development of river basin management plans. She also told the SC members that next year KfW is planning to provide 4 mln Euro to "Nor Akunq" CJSC to invest in wastewater treatment facilities, which will include also biological treatment.

The **first session** of the meeting was devoted to economic and financial dimension of the water sector in Armenia. Ms. Tatiana Efimova and Mr. Vahagn Tonoyan, country water management expert from Armenia, presented the future work on economic dimension of water management reform in Armenia. This included: a) the environmental and economic value of water resources; b) opportunity cost of water; c) support to revision of water use permit conditions; and d) strengthening policy evaluation in the field of water. The presentation was following by Q&A session, were the participants asked clarification questions and commented on the priorities of the proposed economic instruments.

The first session was continued by a presentation made by Mr. Eduard Mesropyan, Director of "Jinj" LLC, on the topic "Towards Development of a National Strategy on Sustainable Sanitation in Armenia". In his presentation Mr. Mesropyan described the current situation and projections in sanitation sector of Armenia, presented the legal framework for the sector, outlined the financial sources and main challenges related to it and presented the key issues for development of sanitation strategy in Armenia.

In the Q&A session the participants of the meeting raised different questions and observations on the proposed sanitation modalities, cross-fertilization with the targets of the Water and Health Protocol, possible tariffs and marginal allowed concentrations of discharged wastewaters.



The results of the first session discussions are summarized below:

- *Taking into consideration that all four discussed issues of economic dimension of water management in Armenia are very important, the Steering Committee requests OECD to conduct a scoping study to elaborate more on each of the discussed issues, and present the findings in the next SC meeting.*
- *The Steering Committee expresses its gratitude to OECD for supporting the study “Towards Development of a National Strategy of Sanitation in Armenia”, and stresses that the study can serve as a good basis for further works in the sector.*

During the **second session** issues related to transition towards EU WFD compliant system of water quality monitoring and assessment were discussed. Ms. Gayane Shahnazaryan, Deputy Head of the Environmental Impact Monitoring Centre of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia presented the new surface water quality standards adopted by the Government of Armenia in 2011, which are considered as a major step in moving towards EU WFD. Ms. Gayane Hovsepyan, Secretary of the NPD Steering Committee presented the scope of work of the recently established working group for transition from the current approaches to water quality monitoring and water quality assessment to a common approach based on the EU WFD. Ms. Araks Davoyan, Deputy Head of Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia updated the members of the SC on the status of the recently established working group.

In the Q&A session the participants of the meeting welcomed the establishment of the working group and stressed the importance of the issues the group will address. Given many challenging tasks of the working group, the following decision was made:

- *The Steering Committee applies to all water projects and initiatives’ in Armenia supported by international organizations, and particularly to EU “Environmental Protection of International River Basins” project, to support the working group in charge of development of EU WFD compliant water quality monitoring and water quality assessment system for surface waters in Armenia.*

The **third session** of the meeting was related to UNECE project on the Protocol on Water and Health and setting corresponding targets for Armenia. First, Ms. Emma Anakhasyan from the “Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment” NGO presented the main outcomes of the NGO coordination meetings and their inputs to draft national targets. Local team members Mr. Vilik Sargysan and Mr. Tigran Oganezov presented draft national targets and target dates under the Protocol on Water and Health according to different target areas.

Presentation of the draft targets was followed by questions and comments from the participants of the meeting. Afterwards, UNECE consultant Mr. Matthew Kahane provided an overview of the possible process of finalization and adoption of national targets.

Based on the results of discussion the following decision was made:

- *The Steering Committee expresses its satisfaction with the results of the work on development of national targets under the UNECE Water and Health Protocol, and proposes UNECE, after incorporation of comments of the SC members, to send out the finalized version to the Ministry of Nature Protection for further dissemination among the stakeholder Ministries for official opinions.*

Finally, in the **fourth session** of the meeting cross-fertilization within the NPD process was discussed, including technical assistance projects in Armenia. Presentations were made by Ms. Lilit Harutyunyan on USAID Clean Energy and Water Program, by Mr. Vahagn Tonoyan on EU “Environmental Protection of



International River Basins” project, by Mr. Eduard Mesropyan on “Establishment of Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System in Paraqar Community of Armavir Marz of Armenia” and by Mr. Gunther Redmer on “Project for Construction of Kaps Reservoir and Gravity Irrigation System”.

All presentations were followed by questions and discussions, as a result of which the following decisions were made:

- *The Steering Committee expresses its gratitude to EU “Environmental Protection of International River Basins” project, USAID Clean Energy and Water Program and “Construction of Kaps Reservoir and Gravity Irrigation System” project for presentations and progress made since the last SC meeting.*
- *The Steering Committee thanks the project “Establishment of Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System in Paraqar Community of Armavir Marz of Armenia” for presentation, and at the same time stresses that the project is still in pilot phase and cannot be applied as model in other territories of Armenia.*

Before closing the meeting the chairman of the SC Mr. Narimanyan recalled the Steering Committee **decisions** made, as follows:

Session 1 - Economic and financial dimension of the water sector reforms in Armenia

- *Taking into consideration that all four discussed issues of economic dimension of water management in Armenia are very important, the Steering Committee requests OECD to conduct a scoping study to elaborate more on each of the discussed issues, and present the findings in the next SC meeting.*
- *The Steering Committee expresses its gratitude to OECD for supporting the study “Towards Development of a National Strategy of Sanitation in Armenia”, and stressing that the study can serve as a good basis for further works in the sector.*

Session 2 – Transition towards EU WFD compliant system of water quality monitoring and assessment

- *The Steering Committee applies to all water projects and initiatives’ in Armenia supported by international organizations, and particularly to EU “Environmental Protection of International River Basins” project, to support the working group in charge of development of EU WFD compliant water quality monitoring and water quality assessment system for surface waters.*

Session 3 – UNECE project on the Protocol on Water and Health

- *The Steering Committee expresses its satisfaction with the results of the work on development of national targets under the UNECE Water and Health Protocol, and proposes UNECE, after incorporation the comments of the SC members, to send out the finalized version to the Ministry of Nature Protection for further dissemination among the stakeholder Ministries for official opinions.*

Session 4 – Cross-fertilization with the NPD process, technical assistance projects in Armenia, closing of the meeting

- *The Steering Committee expresses its gratitude to EU “Environmental Protection of International River Basins” project, USAID Clean Energy and Water Program and the project “Construction of Kaps Reservoir and Gravity Irrigation System” project for presentations and progress made since the last SC meeting,*
- *The Steering Committee thanks the project “Establishment of Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System in Paraqar Community of Armavir Marz of Armenia” for presentation, and at the same time stresses that the project is still in pilot phase and cannot be applied as model in other territories of Armenia.*