



Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management

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Working paper 4

**ACTIVITIES IN THE DRAFT WORKPLAN 2007-2009
TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE JOINT AD HOC
EXPERT GROUP ON WATER AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**

1. The following proposed activities for the workplan 2007-2009 under the Water Convention are based on the outcome of the seventh meeting of the Joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents established under the Water Convention and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.
2. The Joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents proposed to develop work in the following areas (in order of decreasing priority) for the period 2007-2009 and beyond:
 - a) *Provision of guidance and assistance to countries with economies in transition in the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Hamburg seminar*

Under this programme area, Parties will make arrangements to promote the sharing of experience and good practices related to the conclusions and recommendations of the Hamburg seminar in order to support their implementation in countries with economies in transition, through capacity building and awareness raising.

The representatives of the Netherlands proposed to develop a programme to build capacity in countries with economies in transition. The joint expert group invited the representatives of the Netherlands to provide further details on this proposal to the Co-chairmen of the expert group.

- b) *Drawing up guidelines and good practices for tailing dams*

This activity has already started and will be carried out in 2007, in order to submit the draft guidelines and checklist to the fifth meeting of both governing bodies. The draft guidelines and the checklist will be finalized through a similar process as the one adopted for the pipelines guidelines, i.e. by establishing a steering group and presenting and testing the guidelines at an international workshop scheduled for the second or third quarter of 2007 in Georgia. The steering group will include experts from UNEP, UNDP and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.

- c) *Facilitation of the exchange of information on the functioning of alarm and notification systems at the national, regional and local levels established within the framework of the two Conventions and/or international river commissions (e.g. Rhine, Elbe and Danube)*

The exchange of information under this programme area will be achieved through joint consultations of representatives of points of contact designated under the UNECE Industrial Accident Notification System and representatives of international river commissions responsible for early warning and alarm systems.

Furthermore, under this programme area activities will be developed in cooperation with the Water Convention's Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment to promote the integration of transboundary water monitoring and assessment systems with early warning systems.¹

- d) *Provision of guidance for establishing cross-border contingency plans*

On the basis of the experience gained in the international response exercises already carried out and international projects, Parties will share and disseminate lessons learned and develop guidance for the establishment of cross-border contingency plans.

Parties that have already participated in past response exercises will have a special role in identifying the lessons learned and drawing up the guidance. In particular Italy and Hungary proposed to investigate the possibility to lead this activity.

- e) *Promotion of the organization of response exercises, in particular in the transboundary context*

Under this programme area, Parties will continue to promote the organization of transboundary response exercises and the sharing of the lessons learned with other countries.

- f) *Maintenance and updating of existing safety guidelines and good practices for the prevention of accidental transboundary water pollution and provision of guidance on their adaptation to the specific needs and circumstances in river basins*

Under this programme area, the inventory of existing safety guidelines/good practice available on the UNECE web site will be updated and maintained by the secretariat, on the basis of information submitted by Parties, to include, among others, guidelines developed by the joint expert group as well as guidelines developed by transboundary river commissions.

Furthermore, upon request by countries, assistance will be provided to countries to adapt the existing guidelines to their needs, also through on-going or planned international projects.

- g) *Development of methodologies to identify hazardous activities that handle smaller amounts of substances than those specified in annex I to the Industrial Accidents Convention*

Lessons learned from the implementation of the Hamburg seminar conclusions and recommendations showed that small and medium sized enterprises often lack resources to implement environment and safety management systems to prevent damage to human health

¹ At its seventh meeting (Geneva, 3-5 May 2006), the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment agreed to include such an activity in cooperation with the joint expert group in its draft work plan for 2007-2009 to be submitted for adoption by the Parties to the Water Convention at their fourth meeting.

and the environment. Under this programme area, Parties will share knowledge on how to identify these facilities and to prevent damage to the environment in case of accidents.

h) Drawing up guidelines and good practices for the navigation of ships on rivers;

Activities under this programme area will be linked to progress in the pan-European project on River Information Services (RIS) and will only focus on gaps, if any.

3. The Working Group may wish to:

(a) Examine the proposals contained in the present working paper, and further elaborate those elements which should become part of the draft workplan, including, whenever possible, information on the method of work and the time frame;

(b) Draw up additional elements for the workplan related to water and industrial accidents, following proposals by Parties and non-Parties, including, whenever possible, information on the method of work and the time frame;

(c) Inform regarding the willingness of Parties and non-Parties to lead or participate in the implementation of the various workplan elements.