



Convention on the Protection and Use of
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment
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Agenda item 6

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PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS FOR 2010-2012

This document was prepared by the secretariat. The part related to water and adaptation to climate change is based on the proposal by the Netherlands and Germany discussed and endorsed at the second meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (Geneva, 24 April 2009).

The document outlines possible objectives, content and modalities for future programme of pilot projects.

The Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management are invited to discuss and agree on the proposed programme of pilot projects and options to implement them. The Working Groups should also agree on ways and means to finalize the proposal for submission to the fifth meeting of the Parties for possible inclusion in the Convention's programme of work for 2010-2012.

Representatives of Parties and non-Parties are invited to express their willingness to undertake pilot projects on their transboundary waters.

Introduction

1. In the past years, a number of guideline documents have been elaborated under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), for example, the most recent are the *Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management*, the *Strategies on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* and the *Model Provisions for transboundary flood risk management*, all adopted at the last meeting of the Parties in November 2006 in Bonn. In addition, the UNECE guidance on water and adaptation to climate change currently being developed under the joint leadership of the Netherlands, Germany and Italy is expected to be adopted by the Parties to the Water Convention in November 2009 at their fifth meeting. By adopting these guidelines, Parties commit to implement them in their transboundary water cooperation.

2. In order to ensure an early and effective implementation of the guidance documents developed under the Water Convention, capacity-building and, above all, pilot projects are needed. For this

reason, several pilot projects were developed since 1996 to implement 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. Lessons should be learned from these past and already completed pilot projects.

3. The need to consider monitoring and assessment in the broader context of integrated water resources management calls for widening the original focus of 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 river, lake or groundwater.
4. UNECE countries, especially countries with economies in transition in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia as well as South Eastern Europe, experience difficulties in implementing integrated water resources management (IWRM) in general. Furthermore, very few countries in the UNECE region have developed climate change adaptation strategies so far and even less has been done at the transboundary level. Similarly, although the *Recommendations on Payment for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management* have been recognized as a useful tool, the level of implementation has been limited so far. Implementing the new guidance documents is a demanding and challenging undertaking for the countries involved. Therefore, several meetings have called for the development of a new programme of pilot projects to promote implementation of the Water Convention on the ground, such as the ninth meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment on 17-18 June 2008 in Geneva, the third meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management on 22-24 October 2008 in Rome, the conference on water and climate change adaptation on 12-13 March 2009 in Brussels, the workshop on transboundary flood risk management on 22-23 April in Geneva and the second meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate on 24 April 2009 in Geneva.
5. In order to support countries in the implementation of IWRM in the transboundary context in general and of the guidance documents developed under the Water Convention in particular, it is proposed to set up a new programme of pilot projects.
6. A main advantage of establishing such a programme under the Water Convention is that it will help to apply the broad knowledge acquired under the Convention to the practice, and will facilitate exchanging experiences between basins and projects and promote good practices and lessons learned throughout the whole UNECE region.

I. Objectives of the programme of pilot projects

7. The broad objective of the programme of pilot projects is to support UNECE countries and specifically countries with economies in transition (in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia as well as South-Eastern Europe) in their efforts to improve integrated water resources management in the transboundary context.
8. In particular the programme will have three main focus areas:

- (a) 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; and
- (c) Implementation of payments for ecosystem services to support integrated water resources management.

9. In these three areas, the programme will aim to:

- (a) Assist UNECE countries in implementing the Water Convention, thereby also supporting implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.
- (b) 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) Provide a forum for exchanging experience, good practices and lessons learnt in different parts of the UNECE region.
- (d) Support the implementation of the guidance documents developed under the Convention, in particular:
 - (i) The Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change (expected to be adopted by the Meeting of the Parties in November 2009).
 - (ii) The Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood risk management, adopted at the fourth Meeting of the Parties.
 - (iii) The guidelines and strategies for monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters, adopted at the second and fourth meetings of the Parties.
 - (iv) The Recommendations on Payment for Ecosystem Services, adopted at the fourth Meeting of the Parties.

II. Focus of pilot projects

- 10. The pilot projects should as much as possible be developed and implemented in the transboundary context.
- 11. As far as possible, surface and groundwaters should be integrated.
- 12. Although the main focus of the pilot projects programme will be on Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, 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 section VI).

13. 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.

14. 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. For example, those 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 level of awareness, progress and cooperation in the basin as well as depending on data availability and previous work done regarding climate change, the projects (from creating the enabling environment, development of the knowledge base – basin scenario and vulnerability – to the joint planning of a package of adaptation measures).

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

III. Procedures for starting pilot projects

16. Responsibility for the implementation of individual pilot projects will rely on the countries concerned which will have full ownership of them.

17. Upon a request by riparian countries (both Parties and non-Parties to the Water Convention), projects will be developed on specific river basins. If interested, countries should (preferably all riparian countries) send a short (max. 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.

18. 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. letter of intention by Minister, signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, etc.) before the start of the pilot project.

19. Interest has already been expressed by stakeholders from several river basins such as the Sava, the Dniester, the Amur and the Chu Talas. Such interest will need to be reconfirmed formally by the different riparian countries.

IV. Timeframe

20. 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 2-4 years.

21. The following indicative timeframe can be envisaged:

Until end of 2009	Project proposals: expression of interest by riparian countries and submission of application
Until Sep. 2010	Project preparations: negotiations on the focus and modalities of pilot projects, exchange of formal letters or signing of memorandum of understanding.
Autumn 2010	Kick-off workshop for pilot projects
Autumn 2010- Autumn 2012	Implementation of the pilot projects, exchange of experience through website, newsletters and regular meetings
December 2010	Discussion on the on-going 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 and the sixth Meeting of the Parties

V. Funding for pilot projects

22. Funding requirements will vary between pilot projects and can range from few thousands USD up to hundreds of thousands USD, 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 national budgets and be self sustained, 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. EC funded projects, GEF, UNDP projects, World Bank or ENVSEC projects).

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

23. Fund-raising will be the primary responsibility of the countries involved. However, in particular for countries with economies in transition, IWAC (the Convention's collaborating center hosted by the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute), the Water Convention secretariat, and possibly the lead countries can assist the interested countries in finding financial resources to implement the projects.

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

VI. Coordination and support structure

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

26. Regarding climate change adaptation exchanging good practices and lessons learnt is especially essential for improving and enhancing effective adaptation action. The exchange of experience should also include as much as possible external adaptation projects and activities developed by other organisations and countries. This can for example be done by ensuring the link with already ongoing or planned initiatives for exchange of experience and good practice such as the EU clearing house on adaptation, the UNFCCC activities under the Nairobi work programme such as the Adaptation Practices Interface and many other ongoing and new initiatives.

27. The continuous exchange of experience can be ensured through different means such as:

- (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) Methodological studies or research on specific aspects of integrated water resources management of climate change adaptation which are of interest to all or several of the pilot projects (such as the linkages between adaptation and mitigation).

28. At the outset, once the pilot projects have been selected, an initial workshop could be organized in order to establish contacts between the different pilot regions, to demonstrate some possible tools to be used as well as present the experience of already ongoing similar projects in the UNECE region and beyond.

29. The coordination and/or management of the programme of pilot projects will rely on the existing bodies and processes. A possible governance option might be as follow:

(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 (sub-)programme on adaptation to climate change will be facilitated by the Task Force on Water and Climate under the leadership of Convention Party(ies) (The Netherlands and Germany [to be confirmed]), in close cooperation with the European Commission and the Strategic Coordination Group for the implementation of the EU WFD;

(c) The pilot projects (sub-)programme on monitoring and assessment, data management and information exchange will be facilitated by IWAC, in cooperation with the International Office for Water;

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

30. Pending availability of resources, the pilot projects programme will be supported by IWAC and the Water Convention's secretariat.

VII. Possible partners

31. Partners to be involved in the programme of pilot projects will vary depending on the focus of the specific pilot projects. They may include the Ramsar Convention secretariat, the UNECE Timber Committee, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Secretariat of the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), the WorldWide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the GWP (Global Water Partnership), the Regional Environment Centre (REC), the World Water Council and many more. Some of them have already expressed interest in cooperation.

32. Cooperation will also be sought with ongoing or planned international projects. The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) will continue serving the needs in implementing various Conventions' provisions and in synergy with activities foreseen for other elements of the workplan.

33. Pilot projects on water scarcity are currently being developed under the European Union. Given the complementarity between the EU WFD guidance document on water and climate change and the UNECE Guidance on water and adaptation to climate change, it would be wise to join future efforts and design future pilot projects so that they can at the same time support implementation of both strategic papers and promote exchange of experience and cross-fertilization between EU and non-EU countries. That would create the very much called for framework for continuous dialogue in the pan-European region on adaptation to climate change, in line with EC neighbourhood policy. Preliminary consultations have been held with the European Commission on this issue.

Annex

OUTLINE FOR PROPOSAL OF PILOT PROJECTS UNDER THE WATER CONVENTION

An explanatory note for each thematic focus (e.g. adaptation to climate change in the water sector, payments for ecosystem services, monitoring and assessment, and metadata database) will be prepared to facilitate preparation of the applications by interested countries,

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, payment for ecosystem services):

6. Proposed aim(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):