



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

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment
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Agenda item 4

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SEE ASSESSMENT AND CONSEQUENCES FOR THE
FURTHER PREPARATIONS OF THE SECOND ASSESSMENT**

Prepared by the secretariat

1. Being the first sub-region analysed, South Eastern Europe (SEE) provided an important testing field for the second Assessment preparations, including content and method of work.
2. The SEE assessment suffered of a lack of human resources in the secretariat to timely steer and substantively contribute to the process (a full time staff member should have been working in the secretariat of the Water Convention since January 2009, however due to administrative reasons, the post has not yet been filled). Nevertheless, there are number of conclusions of relevance for the rest of the process.
3. The present document summarizes the lessons-learned from the preparations of the SEE assessment, including from the International Workshop on Transboundary Water Resources Management in South-Eastern Europe on 18-20 May 2009 in Sarajevo, and the deriving conclusions and recommendations to the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment for the next steps of preparation of the second Assessment.

Lesson 1

4. It took a long time and several reminders by the secretariat to involve the relevant experts in the process and to get confirmation of participation in the sub-regional workshop.

- ⇒ **UNECE countries should timely inform the secretariat on who are the surface and groundwater experts who will be responsible for the preparations of the second Assessment.**
- ⇒ **In particular for the Caucasus assessment which is the next one in the process, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation and Turkey should nominate the relevant experts by 15 July 2009.**
- ⇒ **The secretariat should as soon as possible also contact and try to involve the Islamic Republic of Iran. Support from riparian countries (both by providing relevant contacts and by bilaterally encouraging the participation of Iran) will be very much appreciated.**
- ⇒ **Similar approaches should be followed for the next sub-regions.**

Lesson 2

5. The fact that datasheets were pre-filled was extremely appreciated by riparian countries, however, due to resource constraints, the secretariat could not make use of a broad basis for information beside the first assessment and could not distribute the datasheets well in advance as needed.

- ⇒ **For the assessment of the Caucasus prefilled datasheets should already be distributed in mid September to allow enough time to experts for preparations. To this aim, concerned countries should send to the secretariat not later than 15 July 2009 background information that should be considered to pre-fill the datasheets (in English or Russian).**
- ⇒ **Similar approaches should be followed for the next sub-regions.**

Lesson 3

6. The International Workshop on Transboundary Water Resources Management in South-Eastern Europe served several purposes and focused not only on the second Assessment. While this was on one hand considered interesting by participants and allowed participation not only at the technical level but also at the political level, it reduced the time devoted to the discussions and real work on the second Assessment.

- ⇒ **The Working Group, and in particular countries in the Caucasus, should advise on the approach to be followed for next workshops, i.e. should workshops be completely devoted to the second Assessment and if so how to ensure appropriate participation or should they be broader in scope**

Lesson 4

7. Experience to date with the SEE assessment proved that assessments of transboundary groundwaters tend to be more complicated compared to surface waters and also considered a second priority. First of all it is difficult to gather the same level of detailed information for groundwaters as for surface waters. Secondly many countries did not nominate groundwater experts to participate in the sub-regional workshop. The situation will be even more difficult for sub-regions where transboundary groundwaters were not addresses in the first Assessment. There is therefore the risk that transboundary groundwaters might become a weak point of the second Assessment and that the desired integration of surface and groundwaters assessments will not be achieved.

- ⇒ **The Working Group should advise whether the proposed method of work, in particular the holding of joint workshops and using joint datasheets, can appropriately address the above issues and recommend any needed change.**
- ⇒ **UNECE countries should ensure the nomination and active involvement of groundwater experts in the process of preparations of the second Assessment**

Lesson 5

The preparations of the SEE assessment proved very demanding. Overall 2 months are needed for the workshop preparations and 3 months are estimated for the workshop follow-up and assessment finalization. Thus for the 5 subregions, overall 25 months will be needed for data gathering (i.e. from April 2009 to May 2011). In addition, on the basis of the experience with the first assessment, roughly 6 months are needed for the finalization and editing of the text, production of maps, proof-reading and printing. The dates of the next ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” are still unknown but preliminary information refers to October 2011, therefore the schedule is extremely tight and no more delays will be allowed. This is particularly important for the availability of funds that should not be a delaying factor in the process.

- ⇒ **Parties and non-Parties should be aware of the very tight schedule of production and provide the needed input in a timely manner.**

- ⇒ **Donors should make available the required resources as soon as possible so that the secretariat can divert the efforts for fund-raising towards the organization and substantive contribution to the second Assessment.**