



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

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment
Twelfth meeting
Geneva, 2-4 May 2011
Agenda item 3

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PROJECT
TO STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR DATA ADMINISTRATION AND EXCHANGE FOR
MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES IN
EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA**

Prepared by the International Office for Water with the assistance of the secretariat and the
International Water Assessment Centre

1. Upon request of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, the International Office for Water presented a proposal on the establishment of a UNECE metadata database of the water sector in the countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) during the Working Group's tenth meeting (Bratislava, June 2009). Its main objectives included facilitation of the identification of data needed for monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters and providing access to the data and information.
2. The Working Group invited then the International Office for Water to continue to lead this activity on behalf of France, to approach donors and to report on progress made at the Working Group's next meeting (see report of the meeting ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2009/2).
3. As a first result, the proposal was officially submitted for approval by the French "Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea", to the "French Global Environment Fund" (FFEM).
4. In July 2009, during a FFEM steering Committee, this project proposal was accepted in the pre-selection phase and a formal decision on launching a feasibility study was taken by the FFEM.
5. In accordance with the FFEM procedures, a tender was launched for this feasibility study. The "Société du Canal de Provence" was then mandated to finalize a project report and to select the two pilot areas for this project.
6. The feasibility study was realized between November 2009 and February 2010, with various missions organized on the 2 selected transboundary pilot areas: the Dniester Basin and the Aral Sea basin.
7. During this feasibility study, the project proposal was also presented by the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes which supported this project (see report of the meeting ECE/MP.WAT/29).

8. The feasibility study was finalised in February 2010 and was approved for financing by the FFEM steering committee in April 2010 and the contracts necessary to launch the project were signed on 16 November 2010 which constituted the official start of the project.
9. Since this date, this project, implemented by the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) with the support of the International Office of Water (OIEau), has launched its first activities on the 2 pilot basin areas knowing that :
 - a) The Dniester component will be developed in close cooperation with the Dniester III project at regional level and, at national level with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Moldova and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine
 - b) On its part, the Aral Sea basin component is registered in the Aral Sea Basin Program n°3 and is developed in close coordination with the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC-IFAS)
10. The action plan on the 2 pilots area includes 3 main phases:
 - 1.Diagnostic of the present situation
 - 2.Definition of action plan
 - 3.Support to the implementation of the action plan

The main purpose of the diagnostic of the present situation consists in:

- a. Making an inventory of the existing water data sources, with identification and description of:
 - o the main existing information systems (Databases and geographic information systems, websites, ...)
 - o the main existing paper and digitized datasets (xls tables, maps, documents with data, ...)
 - o The regular data flow (data exchanges) existing between actors in the various processes related to data collection, bulletin production.
 - b. Analysing the needs of the main regional, national and local water related authorities, in terms of data, service, tools, equipment and training, that might facilitate the production of information necessary for their activities and decision making.
11. The main activities realised by 28 April 2011 concern:
 - The presentation and validation with the main partners of the main actions planned for the 2 pilot basin areas;
 - The creation of a project Website <http://www.aquacoope.org/ffem-eecca/> giving access to information to the project itself and on specific information per basin and per country about institutions involved, first data sources registered in the catalogue, etc.
 - The development and implementation online of an English/Russian version of the metadata catalogue, accessible online from the project website. It is important to underline that this catalogue aims “only” to describe what is existing (indicating “who produces and manages what” data and information and information system) and not to collect the data itself.
 - The organisation of first meetings and workshops aiming to launch the process of metadata production and data flow description (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 16-17 March 2011, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 5-6 April 2011)
 - The organisation of the first steering committee of the project (Geneva, 24 March 2011)
 12. The following actions are planned in the coming months:

- Organisation of complementary workshops for development of the catalogue of data source and of the diagram of data flows through a collaborative approach (workshop in Ukraine and at national level in central Asia are under study),
 - Launching an online survey in order to analyse the needs of the main regional, national and local water related authorities, in terms of data, service, tools, equipment and training, that could facilitate the production of information necessary for their activities and decision making,
 - Proposing a list of measures aiming to reinforce the administration of data that could respond to the main identified needs. These proposals will be then presented for validation of priorities during a workshop at basin level,
 - Production of leaflet and news for dissemination of first results.
13. The documents presenting a summary of the project are available in English and Russian on the project web site at the address <http://www.aquacoope.org/ffem-ecca/> folder “About the FFEM project”.
