



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
Item 12 of the provisional agenda

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management
Sixth meeting
Geneva, 4–5 May 2011
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
International Water Assessment Centre

**PROGRESS REPORT
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT CENTRE
(Period July 2010 - April 2011)**

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) is the Convention's collaborative centre on monitoring and assessment and integrated resources management and a support tool for the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its Protocols. IWAC is hosted at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute. The Draft Strategy and Workplan for 2010-2012 of IWAC were approved by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its fifth session on 10-12 November 2009 in Geneva (ECE/MP.WAT/29/Add.2).
2. The implementation of the workplan depends, among other issues, on the commitment of partner countries and institutions and on availability of resources for the foreseen activities. The support of the Slovak Government as well as some other donors was ensured for the activities of IWAC for the year 2010 and also for the year 2011. In addition, some inter-linkages with other ongoing projects and activities were initialized to develop synergies in relevant transboundary cooperation.
3. During the reporting period an extra-ordinary meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment was held on 15 – 16 December 2010 in Bratislava, hosted by IWAC. IWAC reported and discussed on its activities and possible future work during this session. IWAC supported some participants for attending the meeting - covering travel and per diem costs.

II. ACTIVITIES OF IWAC IN THE PERIOD JULY 2010 TO APRIL 2011

1. Projects

1.1. Project “Capacity building in data administration”

4. The project “Capacity building in data administration for assessing and monitoring transboundary water resources in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)” is executed in two pilot sites - the Dniester River Basin, shared by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova and Basins of the Aral Sea (Amu Darya and Syr Darya river basins) shared by the 5 countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan) and Afghanistan. Several meetings were organized in both pilots.

The following activities

Preliminary phase: Phase of validation of the objectives, project organization and information of the interested parties;

Description of the existing situation (diagnostic):

- Inventory of the national/local data producer/manager of information (on line database);
- Analysis of the existing data sources (digitised or on paper) through a collaborative process based on an online English/Russian catalogue of data sources;
- Analysis of the existing data flows with cartography of the data exchanges existing between institutions, this on each of the main topics related to water management (ground water, surface water, quantity, quality, uses, infrastructures) and both at regional and national level
- Online and specific survey of the partners’ information needs, considering that these needs are specific to each level and domain of water related management activities.

5. IWAC is assisting in the implementation of the pilot project. The component for the regional activities will be undertaken by IWAC within which it is especially planned to:

- put online the 1st regional catalogue exploiting information from the 2 pilot areas;
- produce a summary document underlining the experience in the 2 areas;
- carry out actions for communication and dissemination of the results (presentation leaflets, side events during the conference of Astana, etc)

1.2. Pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins

6. The following pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins supported directly by the UNECE secretariat are implemented and funded in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) in cooperation with other ENVSEC partner organizations as well as local partners: Dniester, Neman, Sava, Chu and Talas. IWAC is participating in projects events and in providing expert advice to the projects. For the Neman project an expert meeting was held on 14 October 2010 in Minsk with participation of IWAC, IWAC also participated in two working group meetings under the Dniester project in 2010.

7. The Dniester pilot project “Reducing vulnerability to extreme floods and climate change in the Dniester river basin (Dniester III floods & climate)” aims to reduce risks from climate change - and specifically flooding - for security by improving the adaptive capacity of

recipient countries. More specifically, the project aims to expand and further strengthen cooperative management in the Dniester river basin to address cross-border management of floods, taking into account both current climate variability and long-term impacts of climate change on flood risks. IWAC organized and supported an expert meeting on modeling, scenarios and vulnerability assessment for the pilot project on the Dniester on 2 to 4 March 2011 in Bratislava which resulted in a detailed proposal for the vulnerability assessment and modeling under the project. Possibly and pending availability of resources, similar expert meetings will be organized also for the other pilot projects. IWAC also participated in the Dniester pilot project meeting on 18 April 2011 in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova.

1.3. National Policy Dialogues

8. IWAC is involved in implementing the National Policy Dialogue in Ukraine. The Steering Committee held on 10 to 11 November 2010 in Kiev approved the IWAC involvement in the organization of the NPD in the year 2011 including pilot activities in the basin of Prut and Siret. Cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) regarding the Danube Delta and other relevant activities has been discussed. Possibly a similar support will be extended to the Republic of Moldova for pilot activities in the Prut basin. The involvement of the IWAC in NPD and other activities in Ukraine was also discussed and supported in a bilateral meeting of the Slovakian and Ukrainian ministers (Jozsef Nagy - Minister of the Environment of the Slovak Republic and Mykola Zločevský – Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine) during the Tisza Basin Ministerial Conference on 11 April 2011 in Uzhgorod, Ukraine. The ministers also agreed to cooperate in other activities in Ukraine linking such efforts to the EU Danube Strategy in the framework of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.

9. A National Policy Dialogue was requested by Kazakhstan. To embark in such an endeavor long-term funding will be needed and UNECE is fund-raising to this end. Once there is certainty on the future funding, IWAC offers the support for organizing the first Steering Committee meeting and expert support.

1.4. Other projects

10. IWAC is participating also in other activities in the implementation of the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health. In the reporting period it was agreed e.g. that IWAC will support the UNECE project on water quality in Central Asia by providing expertise and participating in project meetings. Similar activities are under preparation for Illy Balkhash project.

1.5. Ongoing projects carried out by other organizations

11. The Danube basin cooperation is the main source of experiences and ongoing activities used for dissemination in other Water Convention regions by IWAC. Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and some South-Eastern European countries are also Danube countries participating in the work of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The goal of IWAC is to extend this cooperation outside the Danube basin in

transboundary context in these countries. At the ICPDR Ordinary meeting on 9 to 10 December 2010 in Vienna the delegation of Slovakia informed Danube countries about the IWAC activities. It was agreed that the representative of IWAC will participate in the ICPDR working structures as a member of the Slovakia delegation (mainly in the River Basin Management Expert Group, Public Participation Working Group (WG), Tisza Working Group and in other relevant Working Groups).

12. For the Tisza river basin (Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Serbia) the Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan was finalized and approved during the Ministerial Conference in April 2011 in Ukraine. This Tisza plan also includes water quantity and flood and drought management (and climate change). The work was coordinated by the Tisza Group of the ICPDR co-chaired by the representative of the European Commission. The UNDP/GEF/ICPDR project “Integrating multiple benefits of wetlands and floodplains into improved transboundary management for the Tisza River Basin” is facilitating the preparation of the plan. This project is supporting transboundary cooperation between Ukraine, Slovakia and Hungary via the project “Making space of water in the Bodrog River Basin”, in which the Global Water Partnership Slovakia and IWAC play a leading role.

13. Since November 2009 SHMI (IWAC) is leading a NATO Project in the Program “Science for Peace and Security” entitled “Flood Monitoring and Forecast in Pripyat River Basin” where institutions on national and regional level in Slovakia, Ukraine and Belarus are cooperating. Training activities were organized for operational services in the Pripyat basin during the week 4 to 9 October 2010 by IWAC including through a training and study tour for 12 young scientists from Ukraine and Belarus in Slovakia. On 18 February 2011 the introduction of the first automatic hydrologic station in Lutsk on Styr tributary to the Pripyat was celebrated with participation of NATO, UNEP and other officials.

2. Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters

14. IWAC is playing an important role in the preparation of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters, both in terms of substantial and practical assistance to the secretariat.

15. The subregional assessment for the Caucasus countries and for Eastern and Northern Europe was finalized. IWAC supported the development of preparatory materials for example through pre-filling datasheets. IWAC was responsible for the organization of the subregional workshop on 13 to 15 October 2010 in Almaty “Workshop on Transboundary Water Resources Management in Central Asia”. Costs of the meeting were partly covered from the regular IWAC budget. The subregional meeting for Western Europe countries was held on 8-10 February 2011 in Budapest (during the Hungarian EU Presidency). IWAC is cooperating with the Water Convention Secretariat in revising and finalizing the text of the sub-regional assessments.

3. Sharing of experience and capacity building.

3.1 Trainings

16. The role of the IWAC is to facilitate organization of thematic trainings responding countries needs. The trainings are planned in the individual projects. On 7 to 11 December

2010 a study visit of six Georgian representatives was organized in IWAC on the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive. Monitoring programmes of water bodies as inherent part of the River Basin Management Planning was the main issue of the training. A similar event for Armenian representatives is under preparation for the period 23 to 30 May 2011. Both events are partly cofinanced by the EU fund TAIEX.

3.2 Internet site

17. So far, the IWAC website is mostly used passively. Exchange of knowledge, and sharing information and opinions via a “discussion forum” is expected.

3.3 Exchange of experience

18. Exchange of experience is organized in the individual projects.