

The “Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes: Astana Water Action



Template for reporting on the implementation of the Astana Water Action

I. Background

1. The Astana Water Action (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/5) is a collection of possible actions for improving the status of water and water-related ecosystems through their more sustainable management, prepared for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, September 2011). This initiative aims to provide suggestions for Governments on possible concrete actions to take to better manage their water resources according to the local/national/regional challenges they face. Another objective is to provide arguments for improving the funding basis for water management from all sources.

2. Countries and other stakeholders were invited to commit to implementing some of the actions and to report on their progress at the future meetings of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy. Twenty-one countries and four organizations have committed to 75 actions in the framework of the Astana Water Action. These are: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United States of America, Uzbekistan, UNECE, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Eco-TIRAS International Environmental Association of River Keepers, and the International Network of Basin Organization (INBO).¹

3. At the Astana Conference the Ministers endorsed the Astana Water Action and welcomed the initiatives launched by interested countries and organizations. They invited countries and other actors to implement the Astana Water Action and to report progress to the Committee on Environmental Policy.

¹ Registered actions committed by countries and organizations under the framework of the Astana Water Action are available on the ECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/documents.html>, under the tab “Astana Water Action”). An overview of these actions is presented in the annex to the present document. In addition, a compilation of the actions that were presented at the Astana Ministerial Conference is available in the document ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/INF.40/Rev.1 (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2011/ece/ece.astana.conf.2011.inf.40.e_rev.1.pdf).

4. The Astana Water Action is intended to support countries' efforts in enhancing the sustainable management of water and in greening their economies. The implementation of this initiative can contribute to a large number of international processes and commitments related to water, such as:

(a) Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the future Sustainable Development Goals which are currently under discussion;

(b) Implementation of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its Protocol on Water and Health, as well as of other related UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements;

(c) Implementation of water-related directives of the European Union;

(d) Implementation of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention);

(e) The World Water Forum, in particular the seventh World Water Forum, to be held in spring 2015 in the Republic of Korea;

(f) The "Environment for Europe" process.

5. At its eighteenth session in April 2012 CEP invited delegations to report on the progress in implementing the Astana Water Action, using a template to be prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureaux of CEP and of the Water Convention.

6. The secretariat will prepare a document on the basis of responses received from the Astana Water Action stakeholders.

II. Template for reporting

7. The present template is aimed to harmonize the responses by the participating countries and organizations on progress made in implementing the committed actions under the framework of the Astana Water Action.

8. This template should be filled in and submitted to the ECE secretariat (efe@unece.org) as soon as possible and not later than Friday, 31 May 2013.

9. Information should be provided separately on each action included in the country commitments (please refer to the annex of the present document). Information should be provided through filling the template below for each of your committed actions:

1. Country/Organization:

Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Environment

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Improvement of landscapes role in formation of water regime. Protection of the Lower Dniester and Lower Prut wetland ecosystems by creation of the "Lower Dniester" National Park and Lower Prut biosphere reserve and initiation of creation of the Lower Dniester transboundary protected area with Ukraine.

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

Ecological NGO “BIOTICA” with the support of Ministry of Environment and financial assistance of Austrian Development Agency, is implementing the project “Improving water management and protection of water-related ecosystems in the “Lower Dniester” Ramsar Site”. The objective of the project is to contribute to

The project has the objective to contribute to actions in the field of water management and biological resources, which will mitigate environmental risks, in favor of sustainable development. Project area – district Stefan Voda (Republic of Moldova) and district Slobozia (Transnistrian region), which are bordering with Ramsar Site “Lower Dniester”

As a result of the project the water management regulation facility will be established to support water-boundary ecosystems in Talmaza Wetland Core Area of International Importance by building a water lock and training the responsible persons for it; potable water supply will be sufficiently improved for people of Talmaza Village by building a new water reservoir and extending pipeline; awareness of the need for development of water treatment system will be raised.

Management plans for water lands (Ramsar Sites “Unguri-Golishnitsa” and “Lower Dniester”) has been developed. Plans includes the following information: location, size, accessibility, legal status and history of the site, physical characteristics, biological characteristics, population and land use, State administration, existing management programs, the bases for the development of the mode of protection and control of issues identified by shortcomings of the legislative and regulatory framework in the field of natural resource management, zoning, general description of the zones and the Action Plan for the management of the site.

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

1. Project has been launched on January 2013, that is why is too early to identify some difficulties on project implementation
2. The approval procedure of Management Plans is difficult, because there are disagreements with the Agency "MOLDSIVA" on the territories included in the nucleus zone.

(c) *What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?*

The project involves the preparation of studies and plans to build the first in Moldova controlled spawning grounds on the island Turunchuk. On the both Dniester coasts, within the Ramsar Site “Lower Dniester” are planned activities for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of water protection zones, planting trees and shrubs. In the Ramsar Site, situated in the Transnistria region, studies will be carried and identified the valuable habitats, in accordance with EU methodology «NATURA 2000”, and also will be elaborated recommendations for their protection.

2. To resolve the differences with the Agency "MOLDSIVA", to approve and to begin the implementation of management plans.

4. Usefulness of the Astana Water Action

Template for reporting on the implementation of the Astana Water Action

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements and provide an explanation, as appropriate.

(a) *The Astana Water Action was useful to strengthen political support related to sustainable water management issues:*

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

(b) *The Astana Water Action has helped my country to comply with its international obligations:*

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

If agreeing, please elaborate how (e.g. European Union Directives, UNECE and other environmental agreements, Millennium Development Goals, Commitments made within the "Environment for Europe" process) (up to 250 words)

...

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes / No

Please elaborate (up to 250 words)

...

1. Country/Organization:

Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Environment

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Elaboration of the integrated water resources management river basin plan

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Ministry of Environment has initiated the process of elaborating of legal base for development of Management Plans for basin district. It is planed that The Plans will be developed till the end of 2015. Management Plans of Dniester river basin is developing with the support of Irrigation Sector Reform experts, as well as management plan of the river Prut will be developed with the support of the experts of "Environment protection of international river basins" (financed by European Union). Both Plans are developed with the participation of the Ukrainian and Romanian authorities. The joint meetings with representatives of Romania and Ukraine are planned.

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

(up to 250 words)

...

(c) *What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?*

(up to 250 words)

...

4. Usefulness of the Astana Water Action

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements and provide an explanation, as appropriate.

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strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

1. Country/Organization:

Republic of Moldova, Ministry of environment

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Ensuring Implementation and maintenance of strict target settings of reduction of the pollution from municipal industrial sources and discharge permits

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

✓ Yes / In progress / No

The Republic of Moldova in the process of developing targets under the Protocol "Water and Health" adopted specific targets for reducing pollution by improving sewage treatment, through the construction of new treatment facilities, construction of storm sewers and treatment installation and reduce the discharge of untreated sewage into the water body.

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

Learned lessons:

- to develop an information base for the establishment of the goals through the National Water Policy Dialogue
- to establish a coordinating committee comprising all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, as well as to attract individuals responsible for decision-making.
- developing the targets we must use competent NGOs with substantial experience in the field of water and health as a consulting party
- to attract people with substantial experience in the field of water and health as experts

(c) *What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?*

We examine the possibilities to attract investments for pollutant reducing of water resources by improving sewage treatment, through the construction of new treatment facilities, construction of storm sewers and treatment plants, and reducing discharge of untreated sewage into the water body.

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strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

(b) *The Astana Water Action has helped my country to comply with its international obligations:*

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Republic of Moldova has done substantial progress on implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health and has done concrete steps for the realization of protocol goals.

The new Water Law has been approved and normative acts are developing in accordance with EU Directives.

We achieved progress on developing the collaboration with Romania, within the protection of water resources of Prut river. The basic principles of the Agreement aimed at improving the quality of water provided for the EU Water Framework Directive.

The Agreement between Government of Republic of Moldova and Government of Ukraine concerning collaboration in the field of protection and sustainable development of Dniester River has been signed on 29th November 2012, Italia, Rome.

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes / No

Please elaborate (up to 250 words)

...

1. Country/Organization:

Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Environment

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Improvement the action plans of the emergency situation in industrial accidents

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

Within the seminar on Water Convention, Convention on Danube river Protection and the Protocol on water and health, on 18 April 2013, in Minsk, Republic of Moldova has exposed his proposals to support the assessment of the current situation at the national level and the international level and to develop recommendations on whether to ratify by the Republic of Moldova of the Protocol to the Convention on civil liability and compensation for damages caused as a result of cross-border industrial accidents.

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

(up to 250 words)

...

(c) *What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?*

(up to 250 words)

...

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strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

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If agreeing, please elaborate how (e.g. European Union Directives, UNECE and other environmental agreements, Millennium Development Goals, Commitments made within the "Environment for Europe" process) (up to 250 words)

...

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes / No

Please elaborate (up to 250 words)

...

1. Country/Organization:

Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Environment

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Water policy dialogues

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

Republic of Moldova was the first country which implemented National Policy Dialogues aimed to Integrated Water management. We have already achieved results, that is why we confirm that this mechanism is reliable for the carrying of the policy for implementation of Framework Water Directive, water sector reform, phased tariffs increase (to cover existing expenses), reforming the system of providing of services, creating of water association, etc.

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

(up to 250 words)

...

(c) *What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?*

Planned:

- to continue the Dialogue for implementation of Protocol on Water and Health
- to implement the Dialogue for reforming the sector of water supply and sanitation
- to exchange our experience with others countries
- to continue implementation of the EPIRB project “Countries support for implementation of Water Convention of ECE ONU and Convention on Danube river protection”

4. *Usefulness of the Astana Water Action*

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...

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes / No

Please elaborate (up to 250 words)

...

1. Country/Organization:

Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Environment

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

Republic of Moldova received support from Switzerland Government for development of targets on Protocol. At this moment, continue the work on elaboration and adaptation of Action Plan on implementation of targets.

On 21 of November 2012 has been signed a common Order of Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Health # 94/1166 on establishment of Supervisory Committee, which will coordinate the implementation of targets for implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health. Also, has been signed an Agreement between Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health, ECE ONU and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation on implementation of the project "Implementation of targets in concordance with Protocol on water and health problem in Republic of Moldova".

Has been established an Expert Group to develop of an Action Plan for implementation of targets.

Was set up an expert group on the establishment of the Information Center (Clearing House) for the purposes of the Protocol on Water and Health. It was decided that the Centre will be open and will run at the National Center of Public Health. At the National Seminar on the Protocol (25 April 2013) was discussed and adopted Regulation of activity of Information Center.

(b) What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?

(up to 250 words)

...

(c) What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?

Future steps:

- we plan to continue the work on implementation of the protocol, in the frame of adopted targets in all sectors of the Protocol, in the specified terms,
- we propose to exchange the experience with other countries.

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Yes / No

Please elaborate (up to 250 words)

...

1. Country/Organization:

Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Environment

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Continuation of the implementation of pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins and use of the experience exchange platform on Water Convention

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

Within the common pilot project with Ukraine “Reducing vulnerability to extreme floods and climate change in the Dniester River Basin” (“Dniester-III - floods and climate”) (ECE ONU, OSCE, UNEP) has been done the assessment of floods vulnerability agreed scenarios and models to assess the effects of floods, the frequency and scale of extreme floods.

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

(up to 250 words)

...

(c) *What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?*

(up to 250 words)

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...

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes / No

Please elaborate (up to 250 words)

...

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Ratification of the new bilateral agreement on transboundary cooperation with Ukraine on the management of Dniester basin waters

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

The Agreement between Government of Republic of Moldova and Government of Ukraine concerning collaboration in the field of protection and sustainable development of Dniester River has been signed on 29th November 2012, Italia, Rome. The Agreement has been approved by Government of RoM (Government Decision #42 from 15.01.2013).

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

(up to 250 words)

...

(c) What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?

(up to 250 words)

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4. Usefulness of the Astana Water Action

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...

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes / No

Please elaborate (up to 250 words)

...

Annex

Overview of actions committed in the framework of the Astana Water Action

Actions by AUSTRIA

Ambitious urban waste water treatment and drinking water supply nationwide in place

Implementation of IWRM; Improvement of ecosystems by restoration of river continuity and habitat connectivity

Enhancement of renewable energy production - Refurbishment program for small hydro power plants

Actions by AZERBAIJAN

Development of National Water Strategy of Azerbaijan

Actions by BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Adoption of the Sava River Basin Management Plan, Programme of Measures

Actions by BULGARIA

Invest in environmentally friendly sanitation and wastewater treatment, appropriate operation and maintenance

Actions by CROATIA

Development of River Basin Management Plan

Implementation Plan for water utility directives

Introduction of “recovery of costs for water services” principle

Actions by the CZECH REPUBLIC

Promoting of concept of integrated water management

Water quality and quantity protection

Water quality and quantity monitoring and assessment

Guarantee of minimum environmental water flow in streams

Application of user-pays and polluter-pays principles

Access to save water supply and sanitation and its sustainable pricing

Climate change adaptation and IWRM

Transboundary cooperation and IWRM

Actions by ESTONIA

Improvement of hydro-morphological situation and ecological status of the surface waters

Actions by FINLAND

Promoting the efficiency of water use in production and consumption

Promoting the national policy dialogues on IWRM and WSS in EECCA countries. Support to the pilot project on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins of the EECCA countries

Promoting integrated water resources management especially climate change adaptation and vulnerability assessment

Actions by GEORGIA

Development Climate Resilient Flood and Flash Management Practices to Protect Vulnerable Communities of Georgia

Enhanced Preparedness of Georgia against Extreme Weather Events

National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management

Actions by GERMANY

Training and Competence Centre Karlovac

Climate Change adaptation strategy for the Danube River Basin

Regional Dialogue on transboundary water resources management in Southeastern Europe

Actions by HUNGARY

National Remediation Program of Contaminated Sites

National Program for the Protection of Drinking Water Sources

Introducing non-structural and more sustainable measures in the Hungarian flood risk management

Management and utilization plan supporting ecological baseline studies along the River Danube in the Gemenc and Béda-Karapanca Region (2006-2011)

Upgrading bilateral transboundary water agreements

Monitoring of wetland habitats and their communities

Actions by ITALY

Upgrade existing nationwide water monitoring networks in Italy

Define and monitor environmental flow in the Po river basin district and Arno river basin

Improve utilization of water resources in the agricultural sector in the Po river basin district

Actions by the Republic of MOLDOVA

Improvement of landscapes role in formation of water regime. Protection of the Lower Dniester and Lower Prut wetland ecosystems by creation of the “Lower Dniester” National Park and Lower Prut biosphere reserve and initiation of creation of the Lower Dniester transboundary protected area with Ukraine.

Elaboration of the integrated water resources management river basin plan

Ensuring Implementation and maintenance of strict target settings of reduction of the pollution from municipal industrial sources and discharge permits

Improvement of action plans of the emergency situations in industrial accidents.

Water policy dialogues

Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health

Continuation of the implementation of pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins and use of the experience exchange platform on Water Convention

Ratification of the new bilateral agreement on transboundary cooperation with Ukraine on the management of Dniester basin waters

Actions by MONTENEGRO

Drin Basin/Drin Dialogue: Montenegrin National Consultation Meeting for the management of the Drin Basin.

Actions by PORTUGAL

Project on Environmental Quality of International Water Courses Natural Reserves Common Integrated Water Resources Management Document between Portugal and Spain

Drought Warning and Management System

Actions by ROMANIA

Improvement of water resources quality by reducing nutrients discharges into water bodies

Implementation of the provisions of the bilateral transboundary waters agreement

Actions by SERBIA

Negotiations on trans-boundary water management agreements with neighboring countries

Preparation and implementation of the national Danube River Basin Management Plan

Preparation and implementation of the Sava River Basin Management Plan

Actions by SWITZERLAND

Promoting the concept of integrated water management

Water quality: mitigating micropollutants from point and diffuse sources

Remediation of hydromorphological alterations: Strategic planning by the cantons

Climate change adaptation: Adaptation strategy for Water Management

Integrated Flood Prevention

Actions by UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Assistance to carry out an analysis of the economic ramifications of optimized water-energy resource utilization in the Syr Darya and Amu Darya River Basins

Assistance to carry out an analysis of the impact of Global Climate Change on regional hydrology in the Aral Sea Basin

Actions by UKRAINE

Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in Ukraine

Development curricula for water professionals

Actions by UZBEKISTAN

Establishment of the new Ramsar Site Kuyumazar reservoir on the territory of Uzbekistan

Establishment of the new Ramsar Site Tudakul reservoir on the territory of Uzbekistan

Actions by the EAP Task Force

Strengthening the economic and financial dimensions of water management, including adaptation to climate change

Strengthening institutions for water supply and sanitation

Assessing the water policies and institutions in the Easter Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

Actions by Eco-TIRAS

Development of IWRM plans for Dniester River basin with action program

Promotion of regular bio-monitoring of natural waters, based on macroinvertebrates/algae, for rapid, cost-effective assessment of quality of water bodies

Application of the principle of environmental flow in rivers, ensuring the ecosystem needs/health. Development the use of payments for ecosystem services

Implementation of Dniester River transboundary cooperation

Actions by INBO

Preparation of a “Handbook for Integrated Water Resources Management in Transboundary Basins of Rivers, Lakes and Aquifers”

Actions by the ECE

Promoting cross-sectoral cooperation with the health, environment, agriculture, forestry, energy, industry and housing sectors

Development of transboundary water cooperation in the Dniester, Drin, Kura and Central Asian transboundary waters

Promoting transboundary cooperation in adaptation to climate change

Promoting the achievement of water related MDGs through the reform of the water sector and the development of concrete targets and target dates

Promoting the role of the ECE Water Convention beyond the ECE region at the global level
