

Implementation of the Astana Water Action – draft final progress report



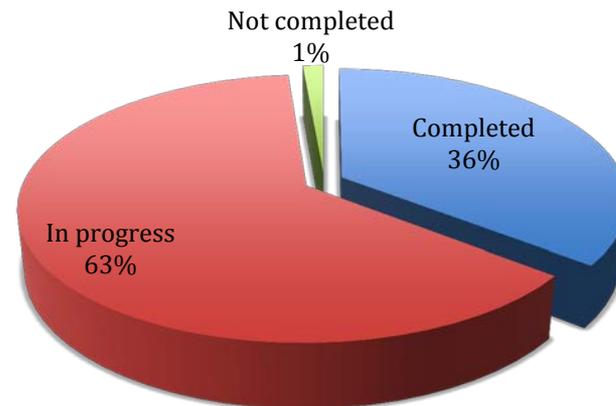
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Astana Water Action (2011-2016)

- Endorsed at the seventh EfE conference
- Initiative based on doc. ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/5, prepared by the Chair of the Bureau of the UNECE Water Convention with a small group of experts
- Collection of possible actions for improving the status of water and water-related ecosystems through their more sustainable management:
 - General actions
 - Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems
 - Sustainable management of water and greening the economy
- 78 actions from 21 countries and 4 organisations

Final review of AWA implementation

- Mid-term review in 2013
 - Request from the CEP 20 for final review of AWA (Geneva, October 2014)
 - Responses by 16 countries and 4 organisations
 - Draft final report (ECE/CEP/S/2016/L.8, brochure) takes into account responses by 18 countries and 4 organizations
 - Of 73 actions reported 26 completed, 46 in progress, 1 not completed
- Astana Water Action Progress**



Progress achieved - Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems

- Many countries developed river basin management plans (e.g. Serbia, Croatia, Hungary) or implemented IWRM in general (Czech Republic, Portugal, Switzerland), improving compliance with EU directives
- Actions on monitoring, information management, assessment (e.g. Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Switzerland) progressed
- Actions on water quality/ water-related ecosystems:
 - Austria upgraded wastewater treatment plans
 - Switzerland mitigated micropollutants
 - Republic of Moldova protected Ramsar sites
 - Hungary improved monitoring of wetlands
 - Czech Republic and Italy worked on environmental flows

Progress achieved - Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems

- Actions on human health (e.g. Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania, EAP TF, ECE) mostly still in progress, e.g.:
 - Bulgaria invested in sanitation and wastewater treatment
 - Republic of Moldova developed action plan for Protocol on Water and Health
- Actions on transboundary water cooperation are still ongoing due to the long-term nature of the process
 - USA financed study on the Syr Darya
 - INBO prepared handbook and pact for basin management
 - Negotiations on transboundary agreements between Hungary and Serbia/ Slovakia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Romania
 - Amendment to UNECE Water Convention became operational opening the Convention for accession by all United Nations Member States

Progress achieved - Sustainable management of water and greening the economy

- Majority of actions with regards to climate change completed. Examples:
 - Finland created more than 100 flood maps
 - Georgia introduced community-based flood insurance, modelling, early warning systems
 - Switzerland developed a study, strategy and action plan and pilot projects
 - Climate change study and strategy developed for the Danube/ICPDR financed by Germany
 - Portugal created a commission for drought monitoring and prevention
 - UNECE and INBO established global network of basins working on cc
 - 5 Actions on water and green economy mostly completed
 - Finland installed new water meters to reduce water use
 - Italy developed territorial water balance plans to increase efficiency

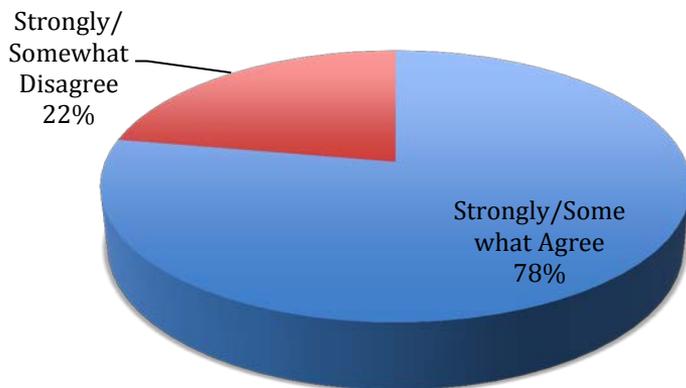
Challenges and lessons learned

- Cooperation and coordination between stakeholders at the national level was a key to the success
- Collection of and analysis of data is still a major hurdle in some countries where resources and capacities are not available to carry out those tasks.
- Lack of financial resources inhibited progress of some actions
- Prolonged political and social engagement related to actions proved to be a positive factor
- Political and administrative challenges, as well as reform processes, were sometimes a stumbling block

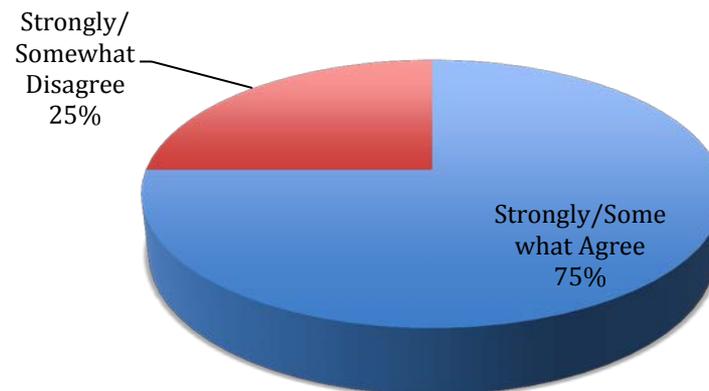
Usefulness of Astana Water Action

- More than three quarters viewed AWA positively as it helped elevate water problems, provided political support and reinforced reform processes
- 75% thought AWA helped to comply with international obligations from EU, UNECE, bilateral agreements

The Astana Water Action was useful for political support for sustainable water resources management



The Astana Water Action helped comply with international obligations



Future of the Astana Water Action

- This final report concludes the AWA reporting period, but stakeholders can continue to submit and implement actions
- Countries plan to continue working especially on transboundary water cooperation, e.g. Azerbaijan- Georgia, Ukraine- Moldova
- Water quality was also considered a priority for the future
- Countries also want to work on urbanization, monitoring, early warning, disaster risk reduction etc.

- Finally: AWA was already used as a model for other similar initiatives
 - Batumi Action for Cleaner Air
 - Draft list of possible green economy actions
 - Paris Pact for Basin Adaptation, signed at COP21 by more than 300 stakeholders in framework of Lima-Paris-Action Agenda

Questions for discussion:

- (a) What was the added value of the Astana Water Action? Has it contributed to sustainable water management and transboundary water cooperation in the ECE region? How should progress achieved during the active AWA implementation, review and reporting period (2011–2016) be presented at the Batumi Ministerial Conference?;
- (b) What lessons have been learned, both positive and negative, from the Astana Water Action experience, also for the development and implementation of future regional environmental policy instruments?;
- (c) What were the main challenges facing the Astana Water Action? Were there lessons learned that can show how these can be overcome? Can these lessons be applied to different environmental thematic areas?;
- (d) How can what has been learned from the Astana Water Action, both in terms of experiences and knowledge gained, be carried forward in future activities on sustainable water management and transboundary water cooperation in the region?