



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/MP.WAT/2006/14
6 September 2006

ENGLISH ONLY

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

Fourth meeting
Bonn (Germany), 20–22 November 2006
Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL WATER
ASSESSMENT CENTER SINCE 2003**

Submitted by the International Water Assessment Center

Introduction

1. The International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) is the collaborating centre on integrated water resources management of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. It was established in September 2000 at the Netherlands Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment (RIZA). IWAC supports the UNECE Water Convention and its Protocols on Water and Health and on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters. IWAC is a joint platform for scientists and policy makers to respond to new challenges in water policy and implementation at national, transboundary and international levels.
2. In particular, IWAC provides expertise on water-related monitoring, assessment, information technology and public participation. IWAC's state-of-the-art reports and guidelines, training courses and workshops, and advice to joint bodies have added value to the work under the Convention.

3. IWAC also supports and provides expertise to the working groups established under the Convention, the ad-hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents as well as the Convention's secretariat and bureau.
4. IWAC builds on a network of leading European water institutions. Representatives of the following institutions and organizations that regularly meet as IWAC's core group are the driving force of the International Water Assessment Centre:
 - British Geological Survey;
 - Environment Agency, United Kingdom;
 - Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE);
 - Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment (RIZA), Netherlands;
 - Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation;
 - National Institute for Public Health and Environment (RIVM), Netherlands;
 - Peipsi Centre for Transboundary Cooperation, Estonia;
 - Portuguese Institute for Water (INAG);
 - Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute (SMHI);
 - UNECE Water Convention secretariat.
5. Below are listed IWAC major achievements since November 2003.

I. Implementation projects

River and groundwater pilot projects of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment

6. During the finalisation phase of the pilot projects on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, IWAC has provided support in the drafting, printing and dissemination of recommendations reports for the pilot in the Morava, Mures and Bug River basins. Pilot projects reports are available on the IWAC website. In 2005, the coordination of the river pilot projects was transferred to the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute (SHMI).
7. IWAC has coordinated the implementation of the pilot projects on monitoring and assessment of transboundary groundwaters. In 2003, two pilot projects were initiated: on the Aggtelek - Slovak Karst between Hungary and Slovakia, and on the groundwater in the Bug basin (between Poland, Belarus and Ukraine). In 2004, the coordination of the groundwater pilot projects was transferred to SHMI.
8. In 2003 a printed version of the Russian translation of UNECE Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Groundwater became available. For South American States, the groundwater guidelines have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Different language versions are available on the IWAC website. The Spanish version will be available in a printed version by the second half of 2006.
9. IWAC participated in the final conference of the Joint River Management Programme on Monitoring and Assessment of Water Quality on Transboundary Rivers, Moscow, Russian

Federation, November 2003. This programme aimed at implementing the UNECE guidelines in the Eastern pilot river basins: the Tobol, Kura, Pripyat and Severski Donets.

Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment

10. IWAC has participated in the Editorial Board to finalize the Strategies for monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters (see document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/12).

11. IWAC has drawn up an inventory of technical guidelines for monitoring and assessment and will continue to update this inventory.

World Water Development Report

12. The United Nations World Water Assessment Programme has invited UNECE to take the lead, together with IWAC, in the process to develop indicator for the second edition of the World Water Development Report in 2005. The IWAC secretariat in cooperation with the Water Convention secretariat has developed a proposal for this project and a framework for the selection and development of indicators for the World Water Development Report that was launched at the fourth World Water Forum in Mexico, March, 2006.

II. Workshops and conferences

Monitoring Tailor-Made IV - Information to support sustainable water management: from local to global levels

13. IWAC organized this fourth international conference in St. Michielsgestel, Netherlands, from 15 to 18 September 2003, together with the Netherlands Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment, the Netherlands Institute for Coastal and Marine Management and the United Nations World Water Assessment Programme (see www.mtm-conference.nl). The proceedings of the conference were finalized in 2004. A special issue of the Regional Environmental Change journal was devoted to some of the outcomes of the conference.

UNESCO-IHP expert meeting: Virtual Water Trade

14. The meetings “Water as a good and as a service”, (Wageningen, Netherlands, November 2003); “Value of water in transboundary river basin management” (Koblenz, Germany, March 2005) were co-organized by the Netherlands National Institute for Public Health and Environment (one of the IWAC core group members) under the auspices of IWAC. These series of four meetings aimed to view water from an economic perspective thus building a bridge between water management practice and economic thinking (see www.iwac-unece.org).

Other events

15. IWAC has participated in and contributed to several events in which it presented and discussed the work under the Convention and especially the work of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and its results:

- (a) Harmoni-CA¹ conference “Understanding each other’s demands and support for implementing the WFD”, February 2004, Brussels, Belgium;
- (b) UNESCO-IHP workshops on internationally shared surface waters and internationally shared groundwaters in Thessaloniki, Greece, October 2004 and in Xanthi, Greece, May-June 2005;
- (c) Building and sustaining successful monitoring programs (Chattanooga, Tennessee, United States, 17 – 20 May 2004), organized by the National Water Quality Monitoring Council of the United States (see www.nwqmc.org);
- (d) Harmoni-CA WP2/WP4 workshop on joint use of monitoring and modelling when implementing the WFD, 4-5 April 2005, Gent, Belgium;
- (e) Integrated Project in the 6th EU framework programme: NeWater; New Approaches to Adaptive Water Management under Uncertainty (<http://www.newater.info>). Special attention in this project is devoted to transboundary regimes and a review of research on integrated water resource management in Europe;
- (f) International Workshop on Information Management and Public Participation in Transboundary Water Cooperation (8 – 10 June 2005, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation) organized under the Convention’s project Capacity for Water Cooperation;
- (g) Interactive Training on River Basin Restoration Wetland Advisory and Training Centre (WATC) 19 September – 7 October 2005, Lelystad, The Netherlands;
- (h) International course on Integrated Water Management, 16 - 27 January 2006, Wageningen, The Netherlands;
- (i) Fourth World Water Forum, 16 - 22 March 2006, Mexico City, Mexico;
- (j) Fourth national water-quality monitoring conference “Monitoring Networks: Connecting for Clean Water” (San José, California, United States, 7 – 11 May 2004), organized by the National Water Quality Monitoring Council of the United States (see www.nwqmc.org).

III. Publications

16. IWAC has contributed to the following publications:

- (a) Report No. 3 of the rivers pilot projects: Recommendations for improvement of monitoring and assessment activities. Separate volumes for the rivers Bug, Morava, and Mures/Maros were printed in November 2003;

¹ A concerted action for the European Community to create a forum for communication, information exchange and harmonization of the use and development of information and communication tools relevant to integrated river basin management and the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

(b) Timmerman, J.G. and S. Langaas (eds.). Environmental information in European transboundary water management. IWA publishing, London UK. ISBN.1 84339 038 8;

(c) Spanish and Portuguese version of groundwater guidelines, available at www.iwac-unece.org;

(d) Timmerman, J.G., H.W.A. Behrens, F. Bernardini, D. Daler, Ph. Ross, C.J.M. van Ruiten and R.C. Ward, 2004. Proceedings of the conference MTM-IV; Information to support sustainable water management: from local to global levels, September 2004. Also available at www.mtm-conference.nl;

(e) Vermaat, J., L. Bouwer, R.K. Turner and W. Salomons (eds.) 2005. Managing European coasts: past, present and future. Springer ISBN: 3-540-23454-3;

(f) Timmerman, J.G., The need for participatory processes and its implications for water management information. Special issue of the Regional Environmental Change journal vol. 5 nr. 4 October 2005, containing contributions from the Monitoring Tailor-Made conferences (available at <http://www.springeronline.com/sgw/cda/frontpage/0,11855,5-40532-70-1136209-0,00.html>);

(g) Background paper on information management in transboundary water cooperation: background document for the Workshop on information management and public participation in transboundary water cooperation, 8-1 June 2005, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation;

(h) Gooch, G.D. and P. Stalnacke (eds.) 2006. Integrated Transboundary Water Management in Theory and Practice Experiences from the New EU Eastern Borders. IWA publishing. ISBN: 1843390841;

(i) Strategies for monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters: background document for the Workshop on joint monitoring and assessment of shared water basins, including early warning and alarm systems, 31 October – 2 November 2005, Tbilisi, Georgia.

IV. Website

17. IWAC has established an Internet website as a platform for communication and dissemination of results. The web site provides background information on various activities under IWAC and offers a range of downloadable documents. The website was revised in early 2005.

V. Newsletter

18. Since early 2004, IWAC issues a monthly email newsletter containing general news items, upcoming conferences and publications on transboundary water management with emphasis on monitoring and assessment. Newsletters are also available on the IWAC website (www.iwac-unece.org).