



Economic Commission for Europe

European Environment Agency



EEA/UNECE WORKSHOP ON RESULTS OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO, THE TACIS PROJECT "STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION AND OBSERVATION CAPACITY IN EECCA"

With financial assistance of the European Community

13-14 November 2003, Geneva

WORKSHOP MINUTES

1. The joint EEA/UNECE Workshop on results of and follow-up to the Tacis project "Strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in NIS (currently EECCA)" took place in Geneva, Switzerland on 13-14 November 2003.
2. The workshop was attended by representatives (EEA National Contact Points (NCPs)/WGEM National Focal Points (NFPs)) of the 12 countries of EECCA, participants in the current Tacis project: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan (see the list of all participants enclosed).
3. Italy and Spain were also represented.
4. Representatives from the European Environment Agency (EEA), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also attended.
5. The Chairperson of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring (WGEM) also attended the workshop.
6. National experts from EECCA, involved in specific activities within the current project, were also present.
7. The welcome addresses on behalf of the EEA, UNECE and WGEM were delivered by Mr Jock Martin, Mr Mikhail Kokine and Mr Yuri Tsaturov, respectively.
8. Mr Mikhail Kokine introduced the amended provisional agenda. The workshop agenda was adopted by consensus (see enclosed).



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9. Mr Jock Martin stated in his conceptual opening that the main goal of the workshop was to evaluate the results and to make conclusions on the EEA Tacis project, jointly implemented in cooperation with ETC/Water and UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring. At the same time he underlined the importance of developing the sustainability of the achieved results and invited all partners of the Tacis project and particularly the NCP/NFPs from the EECCA countries to actively participate in discussions on the future prospects for preparation of the Fourth Assessment to be delivered at 2007 "Environment for Europe" conference in Belgrade and on the topics covered by this Tacis project.
10. Mr Yuri Tsaturov gave an overview of the results achieved by the WGEM during its working period in 2002-2003. He gave a high evaluation of the support the WGEM has gotten within the Grant agreement EEA/UNECE. He especially pointed out the active participation of the EECCA countries in the preparation and review of the Kiev report. The Kiev Ministerial conference endorsed "Recommendations on strengthening national environmental monitoring and information systems" and welcomed "Lessons learned from data collection for the Kiev report" that were the jointly prepared by the EEA/UNECE-WGEM. The Chair WGEM underlined also the important role of the joint EEA/UNECE-WGEM work on the core set of environmental indicators for EECCA countries as a first step in making environmental indicators used in EECCA countries compatible with those in countries - members of the EEA. Mr Yuri Tsaturov expressed his deep satisfaction with the cooperation with EEA and UNECE within the Tacis project and urged these organisations, as well as the Western countries – members of the WGEM to sponsor the future group's activities as a logical follow-up of 2003 successful activities undertaken with Tacis project's support.
11. Mikhail Kokine, UNECE, mentioned that the project components leaders from the EECCA were invited to participate in the workshop in order to present the results of the activities that had place in 2003 within the WGEM and under the financial support from the Tacis project. He introduced Tursynbek Kudekov and Galina Grigoryeva from Kazhydromet, the lead organization on the air topic; Lev Harutyunyan from Armenia as the national coordinator on the preparation of the SoE report of Armenia; Alexandr Shershakov from Typhoon as the chair of the Task Force on tools and guidelines; and Givi Kalandadze from Georgian Ministry of Environment, the lead organization on the waste topic. He also underlined the useful participation of UNEP in several activities under the WGEM.

Session I: Main outcomes of the Tacis project and its inland water component

The session was facilitated by Ms Svetlana UTOCHKINA, Belarus

12. Mr Jock Martin, EEA gave a presentation on the main results of the Tacis project from the EEA perspective with detailed emphasis on Kiev report outcomes, elaboration of the draft EECCA Core set of Indicators and EECCA networking support. He especially emphasized the possibilities in combining cooperation with the EEA, UNECE, UNEP and the EECCA countries in the preparation of the 4th assessment report.
13. The presentation was followed by active discussion of the workshop's participants. The participants took into consideration biodiversity, forests and climate change as new Tacis priority fields for 2004-2006. The question of the Russian translation of the Kiev report was raised, followed by the EEA answer that it was planned to be ready either by the end 2003 or into 2004. Jock Martin commented also on the perspective possibility to use the EECCA core set of indicators as the basis for preparation of the 4th assessment report and



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mentioned as a possible option the "report" consisting of several smaller ones devoted to some prioritised environmental issues in the pan-European dimension. He also referred to the EEA official document prepared for the EAP Task Force "Outline of possible activities for the implementation of the Environment strategy for EECCA: Preparation of the Fourth assessment report". This sets out current EEA thinking on prospects for the design and implementation of the 4th Assessment Report process. It was circulated to participants.

14. Mr Tim Lack, ETC/Water presented the achieved results and perspectives of the inland surface water monitoring component. All 12 countries participated in this part of the Tacis project. He presented the preliminary results on the following elements of the Tacis inland waters subproject:

- overview of the inland surface water monitoring activities in EECCA;
- inventory of existing water databases;
- established EECCA water network of national coordinators and reference institutions within the project;
- comparison of the existing situation with EUROWATERNET criteria;
- preliminary assessment of EECCA countries' rivers networks and selection of basic stations for EUROWATERNET in each EECCA;
- basic needs assessment and recommendations for improvements.

Next steps for future cooperation with EECCA countries were proposed:

- Continue to build capacity of national monitoring systems to "fill the gaps" between current situation and the requirements of EUROWATERNET;
- Support the countries in the development of national databases and networks;
- Encourage the countries to begin the process of validated electronic data transfers from the national to the European level (essential for the 4th assessment of Europe's environment);
- Support the development of EECCA policy-relevant indicators.

15. ETC/Water was congratulated by all EECCA countries for the overall project organisation and high standards of results achieved. The NCPs/NFPs positively emphasised the broad and adequate use of the local EECCA experts in the joint work fulfilled in this part of the Tacis project. They also expressed their readiness to develop their national water reporting systems to deliver electronic information based on EUROWATERNET criteria. EEA got two official letters with request for future cooperation with ETC/Water in the field of EUROWATERNET integration from Kyrgystan Minister of Environment and Emergencies and Uzbekistan First Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for Nature Protection. The main concern expressed regarded the further financial support of this work for EECCA countries. During further discussion the conclusion was made that the countries should be more proactive and initiative to use possibly together with the EEA and ETC/Water the Tacis Regional Programme 2004-2006, which includes water issue as one of the major priorities, as well as other potential donors.

Session II: Indicators, reporting, electronic tools and networking: main achievements

The session was facilitated by Nariman UMAROV, Uzbekistan

(a) State-of-the-Environment report of Armenia



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16. Mr Lev Harutyunyan, Armenia made a presentation of the pre-final draft of the State of the Environment report in Armenia. The report preparation was initiated at the request of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia. It was prepared with the Tacis project's support following the Guidelines for the Preparation of Governments Reports on the State and Protection of the Environment that were prepared by the WGEM and endorsed by the Environment Ministers in Kiev (May 2003).

Major benchmarks included:

- A kick-off meeting held on 30 June – 4 July in Yerevan to discuss the report structure, data collection arrangements, work-sharing among members of the national working group on the report preparation, time schedule etc. National and international experts (Russian Federation, UNECE and UNEP/GRID-Arendal and GRID-Tbilisi) participated in the meeting;
- An extended outline of the state-of-the-environment report was presented to the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring, at its fourth session;
- The draft was finalised taking into account the discussion held during the session as well the comments received from the international experts;
- The launching of the report in Armenian and Russian to take place on 3-4 December in Yerevan.

17. Main issues raised during the discussion:

- A great amount of work done by the local experts in the very short period of time was appreciated;
- Institutional arrangements made in the country should allow the continuity of report preparations on a regular basis after the completion of the Tacis project;
- UNECE Guidelines proved to be very useful in national SoE reporting;
- Support would be appreciated to producing SoE reports in other EECCA countries (like Tajikistan) that were not doing so;
- SoE reports should be used for producing popular versions for the public at large.

(b) Core set of environmental indicators for EECCA and a trial compendium

18. Mr Alexander Chekhovtsov, Russian Federation, made a presentation on the core set of environmental indicators compiled by EECCA experts at the June 2003 St. Petersburg Workshop from a draft core set of EEA. In particular, he described the process and criteria for selecting a core set of environmental indicators for use in EECCA countries to improve reporting at the national level and to facilitate international comparisons and the preparation of assessment reports for ministerial conferences "Environment for Europe".

19. Mr Mikhail Kokine, UNECE welcomed the contributions by EEA experts (Anita Pirc-Verkavrh and Andrus Meiner) and UNECE consultant (Ljubov Gornaja) to the core set of environmental indicators for EECCA and briefed the participants on the Trial Compendium of selected environmental indicators in the EECCA countries. The purpose of the compendium, that was prepared by UNECE with inputs from interested EECCA countries was to demonstrate a possibility of reporting in EECCA countries on environmental indicators included in the core set of environmental indicators for the EECCA that account for interaction between economic and sectoral policy, on the one hand, and environmental policy, on the other.



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20. The main issues raised during the discussion included the following:
- possible development of integral indexes to assess the state of environment;
 - the indicators should be the same for all 12 EECCA countries but they should allow to capture differences between the countries (e.g. territory, population size, endowment of natural resources, climate and structure of the economy);
 - the WGEM should attempt to develop a core set of indicators that would be applicable throughout the UNECE region;
 - detailed guidelines (methodology) for the use of the core set of indicators in EECCA should be elaborated. The methodology of UNCSD Guidelines on sustainable development indicators could be used, among others, when developing EECCA guidelines;
 - environmental signals for EECCA based on selected indicators from the EECCA CSI should be started;
 - the revision of indicators should take place not be very often.
21. The workshop participants summarised and evaluated the main results achieved during the year of 2003 on indicators and reporting:
- The overall situation with monitoring and reporting in EECCA countries was reviewed;
 - The use of indicators for national state-of-the-environment reporting in EECCA was assessed;
 - Recommendations on Strengthening National Environmental Monitoring and Information Systems in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Guidelines for the Preparation of Governmental Reports on the State and Protection of the Environment, were
 - endorsed by the 5th pan-European Conference "Environment for Europe held in May 2003 in Kiev;
 - A publication on Environmental Monitoring and Reporting in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia was issued followed by the ongoing production of a CD containing major project results;
 - SoE report of Armenia was prepared following the Guidelines for the Preparation of Governments Reports on the State and Protection of the Environment;
 - Country experts briefed on the experiences of EEA and other international organisations in the use of environmental indicators;
 - A core set of environmental indicators has been developed and recommended by EECCA NFPs for use in EECCA;
 - A Trial Compendium of selected environmental indicators in the EECCA countries was prepared and welcomed by EECCA NFPs.

Session III: Electronic tools and networking: results and prospects for EECCA

The session was facilitated by Mr Stanislav KOLOTUSHA, Ukraine

22. Mr Alexander Shershakov, Russian Federation, Chair of the WGEM Task Force on Tools and Guidelines briefed the participants on the Task Force activities. He underlined the main tasks and achievements of the Task Force relating in EECCA with regard:
- to the development of common standards and formats of data presentation;
 - to improving compatibility of data in the UNECE region;



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- to the development of recommendations on meta-databases on sources of environmental information and databases, institutions, reports and other information products.

He expressed concern that without strengthening basic monitoring networks in EECCA, the whole structure (pyramid) of data collection and supply therein based on CIRCA, ZOPE, JAVA and other EEA software could be not sustainable.

23. Mr Alexander Svirchevskyy, UNECE consultant, presented activities on developing national environmental meta databases and networks of experts on main data flows in EECCA using the computer equipment procured under the project. He briefed the participants on the progress that countries made in establishing networks of national reference centres on main data flows and in making records in their national catalogues of data sources to be uploaded on the UNECE web portal and on national environmental web sites, where available. He pointed out that some countries were behind the schedule and more efforts should be made to complete the tasks. He presented a demo-version of the WGEM web-site on environmental meta databases in EECCA. He presented also prospects of what could be done in the next two to three years should financial support be made available.

24. Mr Nicolas Perritaz gave a presentation on the "EEA Reportnet tools to facilitate EECCA networking and reporting processes". He focused on the use of integrated tools for facilitating reporting from countries and presented the functions covered by the Reportnet tools. The national repositories (Central Directory Repository –CDR-) and the reporting obligations (reporting obligations database –ROD-) are potentially of interest for EECCA countries. Further steps are to explore how Reportnet tools could be expanded to EECCA countries, because these tools and their dedicated technologies may substantially improve information and data flow from national monitoring to international reporting. Upcoming cooperation between the EEA and EECCA countries could be dedicated to environmental data exchange towards the 4th assessment report. Jock Martin indicated that the EEA would be advising strongly the European Commission as a major donor, to support full implementation of Reportnet tools in EECCA countries in a follow-up project.

25. The main issues raised during the discussion included the following:

- the pyramid of data flows could be stable unless there were monitoring and measurements activities in EECCA countries. When the monitoring information is missing, usually it is replaced by expert assessments that are usually subjective and may not reflect the real state of art;
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- most countries received the computer equipment and were using it successfully for the project purposes. In the remaining countries, the equipment was upcoming and they started the implementation of tasks pending the equipment delivery;
- administrative, customs and other problems had to be resolved in a number of receiving countries during the equipment procurement;
- the countries that did not meet the deadline for submitting WinCDS records to UNECE should make their best to fulfil their tasks in the next two weeks (by end November 2003);
- there was a need of additional expert training in the countries and assistance of uploading the records on national web sites. UNECE would undertake the requested activities soon and would verify that the procured equipment was actually used for the



purposes and would be used by countries themselves for updating and completing their national CDS;

- networks of national reference institutions had to be completed to facilitate, in particular, practical involvement in the EEA Reportnet.

26. The workshop participants summarised and evaluated the main results achieved during the year of 2003 on electronic tools and networking:

- The current situation with environmental networking in EECCA countries was discussed, the major gaps and obstacles to a reliable networking as well as good practices to fill in the gaps and overcome the obstacles were identified;
- EECCA experts were trained on methodologies, standards and formats for environmental information exchange developed by EEA;
- Guidelines on the development of environmental networks and information systems in EECCA countries were developed and implemented in EECCA;
- The networks of national reference centres on priority data flows were established in EECCA;
- Tacis financed computer equipment was supplied to all EECCA countries;
- On-line helpdesk service was provided to EECCA countries by UNECE;
- The national metadata bases on sources of data and data sets, institutes, reports and other information products in EECCA countries were developed and uploaded on Internet.

Session IV: Waste classifications, air pollution monitoring: main results

The session was facilitated by Ms Irina ATAMURADOVA, Turkmenistan

a) Waste classifications and inventories

27. Mr Givi Kalandadze, Georgia in his presentation informed the participants on the work done on waste component of the Tacis project. He presented the report on waste classification and inventories in the three countries of the Caucasus. The detailed assessment was made in terms of collecting and handling data on waste and the effectiveness of existing regulations.

28. Mr Mikhail Kokine, UNECE presented the recommendations developed for these and other EECCA countries for improving the situation and making national waste classification systems compatible with those applied in EEA member countries. He noted also that, although all Central Asian States were invited to attend the second Tbilisi workshop on waste classifications and inventories, two countries did not participate (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan).

29. The main issues raised during the discussion included the following:

- Two workshops held in Tbilisi provided an excellent training opportunity for waste experts from Environment Ministries and Statistical Committees in the interested EECCA countries. Training would be needed for other EECCA countries in the future;
- The Introduction of the background paper should be revised to correctly reflect the starting conditions in the Caucasian States in waste management in 1990s. Additional



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time (by 5 December 2003) would be needed to give interested EECCA countries a possibility to submit written comments to the UNECE secretariat;

- Recommendations provided a useful instrument to EECCA countries to improve their waste classification and inventory systems.

30. The workshop participants summarised and evaluated the main results achieved during the year of 2003 on waste classifications and inventories:

- The current situation in a number of EECCA countries in terms of collecting and handling data on waste and the effectiveness of existing regulations was analyzed and discussed;
- EECCA experts were informed about approaches applied in EEA member countries to improve waste classification systems, data collection and the use of indicators;
- A background paper on the waste classifications and inventories in the three Caucasian countries was prepared;
- Recommendations on the Improvement of Waste Classification and Inventory Systems in East European, Caucasian and Central Asian Countries were developed and welcomed by EECCA NFPs
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b) Air pollution monitoring and modelling and air emission inventories

30. Ms Galina Grigorieva, Kazakhstan, made a detailed presentation of the report on Air pollution monitoring and modelling and air emission inventories in Kazakhstan and the recommendations for Kazakhstan and other EECCA countries – new Parties to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP). She described the process of the report preparation and recommendations including the role of MSC-E, NILU/CCC, an international consultant and representatives of UNECE and EEA.



31. Ms Albena Karadjova, UNECE, briefed the participants that the EMEP Bureau under CLRTAP was pleased with the work accomplished and fully supported the recommendations. The Bureau underlined that the cooperation between EECCA countries and international bodies (the Convention Secretariat, EMEP Bureau, MSCE-E, MSC-W and CCC) should be enhanced. The experts from the region should actively participate in meetings under the Convention. The EMEP Bureau expressed its wish to be kept informed on future plans.

32. The main issues raised during the discussion included the following:

- The substantial amount of work done by the local experts in a very short period of time;
- The background report and recommendations to EECCA countries- new Parties to the CLRTAP were welcomed;
- The work on the topic should continue and studies of more EECCA countries should be undertaken;
- The EECCA countries should actively participate in the EMEP activities;
- The Executive Body of the CLRTAP during its 21th session (15-18 December 2003) should be informed on the project results.

33. The workshop participants summarised and evaluated the main results achieved during the year of 2003 on air pollution and modelling:

- EECCA experts were briefed on the best practice in the UNECE region with air pollution monitoring and modeling and air emissions inventory including estimates and reporting procedures;
- The report and recommendations on air pollution monitoring and emission inventories in Kazakhstan were prepared and welcomed by EECCA NFPs;
- Framework recommendations on Air pollution monitoring and modelling and air emission inventories for EECCA countries – new Parties to the CLRTAP were developed and welcomed by EECCA NFPs.

Session V: Remote sensing: results and prospects

The session was facilitated by Mr Petru COCIRTA, Republic of Moldova

34. Mr Lahuti Aliyev, Azerbaijan made a presentation on the prospects of application of remote-sensing techniques for environmental monitoring and assessments. He briefly described the present situation with RS application in the EECCA countries, and in particular, in Azerbaijan. Then he pointed out the critical environmental issues in Azerbaijan and the possible application of RS techniques to deal with them.

35. Mr Yaroslav Bulych, UNECE, briefed the participants on the following:

- the activities of the Task Force on Remote Sensing within the UNECE WGEM in 2003;
- the successful examples of RS application for environmental monitoring in European countries demonstrated at the two workshops under the project;
- the main obstacles on the way of RS application for environmental monitoring and assessment as identified during the workshops;
- the potential benefits from using RS data in EECCA countries;
- the discussion held in Baku on prospects for possible follow-up activities in 2004-2007.



36. The main issues raised during the discussion included the following:

- interest of countries to see practicalities of RS application in environmental monitoring and assessment, in particular with regard to regional problems (e.g. the Caspian Sea, the Aral Sea, mountains and desertification areas);
- need to coordinate activities in the countries and to combine efforts of international actors concerned;
- attempts should be made to develop guidelines and methodology to integrate the RS data into environmental reporting process.

37. The workshop participants summarised and evaluated the main results achieved during the year of 2003 on remote sensing:

- EECCA experts were briefed on the current RS application potential for environmental assessments at the national, sub regional and regional levels;
- The current EECCA countries requirements and capabilities in this field were reviewed and discussed;
- The gaps, major obstacles, technical, organizational and institutional problems on the way to broader use of remote sensing for environmental assessment and monitoring in EECCA countries were identified;
- A draft project proposal for environmental assessments of the Eurasian region using a key set of indicators derived from remote sensing data was developed for submission to prospective donors.

Session VI: Needs and prospects for further capacity-building activities in EECCA

The session was facilitated by Mr Yuri TSATUROV, Russian Federation

38. In the discussion on the needs and prospects for further capacity-building activities in EECCA participated:

- Mr Jock Martin, EEA emphasised for the future prospects for cooperation with EECCA countries from political perspective the realisation of the Environment strategy for EECCA countries, EU's priorities for environmental cooperation with neighbouring countries and EU Water Initiative. For realistic prospects for further cooperation: 4th Assessment report; Tacis Regional programme 2004-2006 and cooperation on water issues as one of the major priorities in the Tacis Indicative Programme 2004-2006 and the EAP Task Force;
- Mr Nariman Umarov, Uzbekistan suggested to prepare environmental Signals series during 2004-2005 for five Central Asian countries;
- Ms Svetlana Utochkina, Belarus commented that the mandate and major efforts of the WGEM undertaken during last 2 years should be supported and focus should be on all 12 EECCA countries;
- Mr Omor Rustembekov, Kyrgystan supported the Uzbekistan initiative mentioning the decisions of the Kiev Ministerial conference, which among others supported the subregional initiatives;
- Mr Petru Cocirta, Moldova suggested to work on subregional initiatives, but not only within the EECCA region, but also with the neighbouring EU countries;
- Mr Stanislav Kolotusha, Ukraine stated in his intervention that the WGEM should concentrate on the big, really pan-European environmental issues, covering all 12



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EECCA countries and in close cooperation with UNECE and EEA. He mentioned a possibility of elaboration of a legally binding instrument for all UNECE countries to strengthen and harmonize monitoring and assessment;

- Mr Yuri Tsaturov, Chair WGEM agreed with suggestions to prepare the subregional state of environment signals and evaluations. One of them, as he pointed out, could be for the Black Sea region. On suggestion to elaborate a legally binding instrument the Chair commented that in accordance with its mandate the WGEM does not have this kind of tasks. He advised the countries to be more realistic and concentrate more on collecting the environmental data and supporting/developing national monitoring stations. Cooperation with the EEA is important for the EECCA countries especially in the field of methodology and in use of the CSI for EECCA. To further support the work of the WGEM the outlines of its work in 2004-2005 should be finalised in a form of a plan to be approved by the WGEM itself and CEP and delivered to potential donors;
- Mr Mikhail Kokine, UNECE commented on the fundraising and potential donor support. As it turns out the Tacis support in 2004 may hardly be expected but it is a possibility for years 2004-2006. In 2004 WGEM most likely would be able to hold one meeting and 2-3 EECCA-wide workshops with support of some countries, among them Spain and UK. It is doubtful that in the situation of limited resources it could be possible to do something on a country or subregional levels. By the end of this year UNECE is planning to address companies, specialised in production of environmental monitoring equipment and assessment to sponsor WGEM activities as well. Cooperation with EEA in 2004 might concentrate on Internet-based technologies and CSI.

39. All participants of the Workshop highly appreciated the Tacis, EEA and UNECE support for the activities of the WGEM and results achieved in all project six topics. The development of the 4th assessment report, CSI, Reportnet data exchange and EUROWATERNET were mentioned among issues for future cooperation.

