



NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUES ON WATER IN COUNTRIES IN EASTERN EUROPE, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA (EECCA) UNDER THE EU WATER INITIATIVE DRAFT OECD/UNECE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2014

This document presents the joint Programme of Work for 2014 of the OECD and UNECE under the EUWI EECCA. Proposed projects are based on national priorities, preliminary discussed with key local stakeholders.

The programme of work aims at assisting the target countries in adopting a more integrated approach to water management, addressing the current fragmentation of water resource management and improving multi-stakeholder participation. It identifies and removes some of the key hurdles of integrated water resources management (IWRM), while reflecting countries' level of socio-economic development.

The activities focus on the development and implementation of water policy reforms in EECCA countries. In particular, they help elaborate new “policy packages” (government strategies, laws, regulations, action or investment plans), as well as monitor implementation of the adopted policy packages.

The activities are undertaken under the framework of on-going National Policy Dialogues (NPDs). They support analytical work to prepare policy packages and discussions in NPD meetings.

Planned activities can be grouped under three broad headings:

- Water-energy-food security nexus. This covers activities which promote the use of economic instruments to make the best use of available water resources and to strengthen the economic dimension of water policies (see projects in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan);
- Green economy agenda. This covers activities which combine water and health, support the expansion and reliable provision of water supply and sanitation services (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan), or strive to manage water as a driver for economic development (Russia, in the Lake Baikal region);
- Water diplomacy. This covers in particular activities in transboundary basins (see on-going activities in Azerbaijan -Georgia and Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan). This also benefits from activities which promote water efficiency in upstream countries (see for instance the projects in Tajikistan).

An overview of activities planned for 2014 is provided per country below.

Delegates are requested to endorse that programme of work, which results from previous commitments and discussions at the Helsinki EUWI EECCA Working Group meeting (24-25 October 2013). Written comments are expected by 15 December 2013.

Armenia

The next NPD meeting will take place on 12 December 2013 in Yerevan.

In 2014 the OECD will continue the on-going NPD activities aimed at i) the reform of economic instruments for water resources management and the design of new ones at national level; and ii) the development of a strategy for wastewater collection and treatment in Armenia. An expert working group meeting to discuss the findings will take place in February 2014.

The UNECE will complete the project on setting the national targets on water and health by July 2014. As Armenia has indicated willingness to establish a working group on water quality monitoring in 2014, these activities might be supported. Further priorities for the second half of 2014 will be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting.

Azerbaijan

In 2014, the OECD will continue implementation of a project to assess the potential benefits of enhanced transboundary cooperation between Azerbaijan and Georgia. An expert workshop will be organised in January 2014. UNECE will continue its support to the negotiations between Azerbaijan and Georgia on bilateral agreement about management of transboundary Kura river.

In addition, the OECD is planning a mission to Baku in December 2013 to hold bilateral consultations with the key partners and stakeholders including the State Water Agency under the Ministry of Emergency, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Economic development and others. As a result of the mission, the date for the next NPD meeting in Azerbaijan will be set (in a first quarter of 2014), and priorities for future work in the country will be identified.

UNECE has supported the drafting of national water sector reform strategy and its implementation plan in 2012-2013. The State Water Agency has indicated that the strategy might need reformatting so that it can be adopted as regulatory act. Therefore the upcoming OECD mission will clarify if and to what extent changes are needed.

UNECE might start work on drafting of national targets on water and health if the request will be confirmed at the next Steering Committee meeting.

Georgia

UNECE will be providing a technical assistance to ensure that the drafted new water law will be smoothly adopted by the national Parliament in 2014. UNECE will also support the legal working group that will come up with the plan of implementation of the water law, outlining necessary activities, timeline and financial resources. Legal working group will also draft priority subordinate acts that are most urgently needed for full implementation of the principles of new water law.

In 2014, the OECD will continue implementation of a project to assess the potential benefits of enhanced transboundary cooperation between Azerbaijan and Georgia. An expert workshop will be organised in January 2014 in Tbilisi.

The steering committee of the NPD will take place in March 2014 and possibly at the end of the year.

Kazakhstan

On-going activities will continue in 2014. The OECD will continue the project on Sustainable business models for Water supply and sanitation in small towns and rural areas in Kazakhstan. The steering committee of the NPD will meet in March 2014.

UNECE will continue supporting the works to facilitate discussion towards Kazakhstan joining the Protocol on Water and Health. Once a political decision will be taken, the process of drafting the national targets on water and health will be started. If so requested by the Steering Committee, UNECE will launch capacity building activities in support of selected river basin council, also using knowledge gained in Kyrgyzstan.

The steering committee of the NPD will meet in March 2014 and possibly at the end of the year.

Kyrgyzstan

The OECD plans to finalise the project on facilitating the reform of economic instruments for water management in Kyrgyzstan.

UNECE will continue its support to the Chu river basin council. Council meetings will be organised, as well as the activities of the local expert group that will be involved in developing the Chu basin management plan step-by-step.

The steering committee of the NPD will meet in March 2014 and possibly at the end of the year.

Moldova

UNECE will continue its support to the implementation of national targets on water and health and to the newly established clearing house for information on water and health.

Russia

The OECD will start a new project on water resources management in the Republic of Buryatia (Lake Baikal basin), exploring options to combine resource protection and economic development.

The OECD and UNECE are considering participating in, and organising a side-event at, the International “Clean Water” forum. That would be an opportunity to promote the EUWI EECCA approach in Russia.

Tajikistan

The OECD will implement a project aimed at strengthening economic regulation for water supply and sanitation in Tajikistan, through building capacity in the Anti-Monopoly Agency. The focus will be on tariff setting, measures to tackle affordability issues, and indicators for monitoring the performance of water utilities. The activity will be launched in the first quarter of 2014.

To support the on-going reform of the water sector, the OECD will launch activities to facilitate the implementation of irrigation sector reform and to achieve financial sustainability of the sector.

UNECE is supporting the work of legal working group throughout 2014. The working group will produce an analysis on precise changes needed in various laws and bylaws in order to fully apply the national water sector reform strategy and the IWRM principles. Working group will also be engaged in drafting of the new water code, the work to be probably continued until early 2015.

The next NPD meeting will take place in February 2014.

Turkmenistan

UNECE will continue its legal support to the process of adoption of the draft water code in the national Parliament in Spring 2014. Based on successful work on Turkmenistan's accession to the Water Convention in 2012, UNECE is planning to launch the work on two new areas in Turkmenistan: preparations for joining the Protocol on Water and Health; and the Convention on Industrial Accidents. A capacity building event is also being planned in 2014 to this regard.

The next NPD meeting will take place in early April 2014.

Table 1 below presents a tentative schedule for major events (e.g. NPD meetings), and deadlines for key activities under the EUWI NPDs in EECCA in 2014. The Table includes only activities for which explicit demand from the countries have been expressed and funding is certain; other activities may emerge when additional co-financing is available.

