



Convention of the Protection and Use of
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
Task Force on Water and Climate
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Agenda item 6

FUTURE WORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Submitted by delegations of the Netherlands and Germany

Introduction and rationale

1. The UNECE guidance on water and adaptation to climate change currently developed under the joint leadership of the Netherlands, Germany and Italy is expected to be adopted by the Parties to the Water Convention in November 2009. By this Parties will commit to implement it in their transboundary water cooperation and in their adaptation efforts. In order to ensure an early and effective implementation of the Guidance, capacity-building and, above all, pilot projects will be needed. This document outlines possible activities for the Workplan 2010-2012 on water and climate adaptation.

2. The Task Force is invited to discuss and agree on the proposed activities and options to implement them. In particular, representatives of Parties and non-Parties will be invited to express their willingness to undertake pilot projects on their transboundary waters.

1. Communication and capacity-building

3. It is important to further promote the Guidance among different stakeholders in the UNECE region: governments, local authorities, water managers, NGOs, academia etc. For this purpose, after adoption at the Meeting of the Parties in November 2009, the Guidance will be published and printed in English, Russian and French and distributed to focal points. If possible, a short brochure or the executive summary can be published separately and translated into different languages. The Guidance should be presented at different occasions by members of the drafting group and the secretariat as already done during the past years.

4. In addition, specific workshops at the national level or at the sub-regional level, focusing in particular on countries with economies in transition, could be organized to illustrate the different steps of the Guidance. One possible option is to use the framework of the Capacity for Water Programme (CWC), which is intended to strengthen the capacity of transboundary water managers in EECCA, and to organize one of the next CWC workshops in 2010 or 2011 focusing on climate change adaptation and water.

2. Proposed programme of pilot projects

5. Very few countries have elaborated adaptation strategies so far and even less has been done at the transboundary level. In addition, several meetings have called for the development of pilot projects

such as the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management on 22-24 October 2008 in Rome, the conference on water and climate change adaptation on 12-13 March 2009 in Brussels, the World Water Forum etc.

6. In order to support countries in the implementation of the Guidance and in the development of adaptation measures and strategies it is proposed to set up a programme of pilot projects. These pilot projects would be established for limited number of transboundary basins in the UNECE region and should be linked through a common overarching structure. Interest has already been expressed by stakeholders from several river basins such as the Sava, the Dniester, the Amur and the Chu Talas.

7. A main advantage of establishing such a programme under the Water Convention is that it will allow exchanging experience between basins and projects, promoting good practices and lessons learned throughout the whole UNECE region.

A) Objectives of the programme of pilot projects

8. The programme of pilot projects would aim to:

- (a) implement and test the Guidance on Water and Climate Adaptation
- (b) assist UNECE countries in implementing the Water Convention and the EU Water Framework Directive under conditions of a changing climate, also in light of the EU White Paper,
- (c) support UNECE countries and specifically countries with economies in transition (in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia as well as South-East Europe) in their efforts to develop adaptation strategies and measures
- (d) create positive examples demonstrating the benefits of and possible mechanisms for transboundary cooperation in adaptation planning and implementation, also beyond the UNECE region
- (e) provide a forum for exchange of experience good practices and lessons learnt regarding adaptation projects in different parts of the UNECE region.

9. The pilot projects will mainly focus on developing adaptation strategies which lay the ground for further action. Therefore, in the first stage, pilot projects will focus on the planning of adaptation strategies and not on the funding and implementation of the relevant measures.

B) Geographical and thematic focus of pilot projects

10. Although the pilot projects programme would focus on Eastern Europe, South East Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia it is expected that pilot projects will be set up also in EU-countries linking the implementation of the Guidance to the implementation of the EU WFD and the WFD guidance document on water climate change. Exchange of experience between EU- and non-EU countries should be ensured.

11. Depending on the level of awareness, progress and cooperation in the basin as well as depending on data availability and previous work done regarding climate change, the projects will address different steps of the guidance and of the development of an adaptation strategy (from creating the enabling environment, development of the knowledge base – basin scenario and vulnerability – to the joint planning of a package of adaptation measures). Depending on the basin size and other factors,

pilot projects might cover only parts of river basins. Therefore, the duration of the pilot project and funding required will vary significantly from basin to basin. Most projects are expected to last 2-4 years.

C) Procedures for starting pilot projects

12. Upon a request by riparian countries (both Parties and non-Parties to the Water Convention), projects will be developed on specific river basins. If interested, countries should send a short (max. 10 pages) project proposal to the UNECE secretariat (water.convention@unece.org) including some background information on the river basin and, if available, previous activities on climate change as well as the planned activities and timeframe and, if possible, an indicative overall budget. A contact person should also be included for further communication.

13. Following the Guidance spirit, pilot projects should as much as possible be developed and implemented at the transboundary level. Therefore, neighbouring countries should as far as possible prepare joint proposals or at least consult with their neighbours before submitting a proposal. Neighbouring non-UNECE countries may be included in project proposals. If they exist, existing joint bodies and river basin commission might be the most appropriate venue to discuss, plan and implement such pilot projects, in close consultation with the basin countries.

14. A firm commitment by all riparian countries to participate in the pilot projects should be a prerequisite. Such commitment will need to be expressed in a formalized way (letter of intention by Minister, signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, etc.)

D) Coordination and support structure

15. Exchange of experience, good practices and lessons learnt is crucial for improving and enhancing effective adaptation action. This has been underlined at numerous occasions such as the conference on water and climate change adaptation on 12-13 March 2009 in Brussels, the World Water Forum etc. The exchange of experience should also include as much as possible external adaptation projects and activities developed by other organisations and countries. This can for example be done by ensuring the link with already ongoing or planned initiatives for exchange of experience and good practice such as the EU clearing house on adaptation, the UNFCCC activities under the Nairobi work programme such as the Adaptation Practices Interface and many other ongoing and new initiatives.

16. The continuous exchange of experience can be ensured through different means such as:

- (a) creation of a dedicated website with information about all pilot projects
- (b) creation of an internal website/ wiki space for direct communication between different pilot areas
- (c) publication of a regular newsletter
- (d) Organization of periodic (e.g. annual) face-to-face meetings between teams involved in the different projects.
- (e) Methodological studies or research on specific aspects of adaptation which are of interest to all or several of the pilot projects (such as the linkages between adaptation and mitigation).

17. At the outset, once the pilot projects have been selected, an initial workshop could be organized in order to establish contacts between the different pilot regions, to demonstrate some possible tools to

be used as well as present the experience of already ongoing adaptation projects in the UNECE region and beyond.

18. The pilot projects will be supported by the Water Convention's secretariat and IWAC (the Convention's collaborating center hosted by the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute).

19. Several options for the coordination and/ or management of the programme of pilot projects are possible, building on existing bodies and processes and will need to be investigated. These might include among others:

(a) A body such as the Task Force on Water and Climate under the leadership of Convention Party(ies) responsible for the programme design

(b) A structure supporting the programme management in the different pilot basins, under the umbrella of the EC and the Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention.

(c) The structure could be linked to the Strategic Coordination Group for the implementation of the EU WFD

(d) A core group established under IWAC focusing on pilot projects.

E) Possible partners

20. Given the complementarity between the EU WFD guidance document on water and climate change and the UNECE Guidance, it would be wise to join future efforts and design such pilot project programme so that it can at the same time support implementation of both strategic papers and promote exchange of experience and cross-fertilization between EU and non-EU countries. That would create the very much called for framework for continuous dialogue in the pan-European region on adaptation to climate change, in line with EC neighbourhood policy.

21. Several other partners could be involved in the pilot projects programme such as the Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate, UNESCO, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe), the ENVSEC (Environment and Security) Initiative, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the GWP (Global Water Partnership), the Regional Environment Centre (REC), the World Water Council and many more. Some of them have already expressed interest in cooperation.

F) Funding for pilot projects

22. Funding requirements will vary significantly between pilot projects and can range from few thousands USD up to hundreds of thousands USD, depending on the scope of the project, the nature of the basin, etc. As no funding is readily available mixed funding arrangements can be envisaged for the different pilot projects depending on the economic development of the countries involved, on the scope of the project, on previous work done etc.:

(a) Some pilot projects can be totally funded through national budgets and be self sustained, but some monetary transfer might be necessary between riparian countries in the basin.

(b) Some projects can rely on funding from existing or new international projects in which a climate change component is included (e.g. EC funded projects, GEF, UNDP projects, World Bank or ENVSEC projects)

(c) For some pilot projects, additional funding will be necessary. This funding may be raised through bilateral or multilateral assistance.

23. Additional funding will also be needed for the coordination and support structure (see below), for example for organizing a regular, possibly annual exchange of experience between the different pilot projects. Funding opportunities for this type of activities have to be sought.
