



Convention of the Protection and Use of  
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes  
Task Force on Water and Climate  
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Item 3 of the provisional agenda

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS

### Background and objectives

1. Following the adoption of the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) (Geneva, 10-12 November 2009), Parties decided to foster implementation of the Guidance through a programme of pilot projects and a platform for exchanging experience with adaptation to climate change in the transboundary context. It entrusted the Task Force on Water and Climate to facilitate the pilot projects programme. The Task Force will also serve as a venue for the exchange of experience between the pilot projects and other similar initiatives.
2. The programme of pilot projects aims to:
  - (a) Implement and test the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change;
  - (b) Assist UNECE countries in implementing the Water Convention and the European Union (EU) Water Framework Directive (WFD) under conditions of a changing climate, also in light of the EU White Paper on adapting to climate change<sup>1</sup>;
  - (c) Support countries and specifically countries with economies in transition (in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in South-Eastern 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 region.
3. Although the pilot projects programme focuses on Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, it is expected that pilot projects will be set up also in European Union (EU)-countries linking the implementation of the Guidance to the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the WFD guidance document “River Basin Management in a Changing Climate”. Exchange of experience between EU and non-EU countries will be ensured through the platform for exchanging experience (see document TFWC/2010/4).
4. The pilot projects mainly focus on developing adaptation strategies which lay the ground for further action. Therefore, in the first stage, pilot projects will mainly focus on the planning of adaptation strategies and only to a very limited extent, on the funding and implementation of the relevant measures.

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<sup>1</sup> EU White paper - Adapting to climate change: towards a European framework for action (COM/2009/0147 final).

5. The specific focus and objectives of each pilot project will be defined jointly by the riparian countries in the basin concerned. Depending on the level of advancement and previous relevant activities in the basin, the pilot projects will focus on different steps of the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change and of the development of an adaptation strategy. Depending on the level of awareness, progress and cooperation in the basin, as well as on data availability and previous work done regarding climate change, the projects address, inter alia: (a) the creation of an enabling environment; and (b) the development of the knowledge base, e.g. joint development of scenarios and vulnerability assessments, up to (c) the joint planning of a package of adaptation measures.

6. Depending on the local needs and other existing projects the pilot projects may focus on different expected impacts of climate change and climate variability such as increased floods, water scarcity or droughts.

7. The Task Force on Water and Climate facilitates the programme of pilot projects, but is not a decision-making body for the pilots, it acts as a community of practice/ practitioners, a resource tool or platform for advice and sharing experiences which the pilot projects can benefit from. The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (WG IWRM) under the Water Convention is overseeing the implementation of the entire work programme of the Water Convention and thus also the pilot projects programme, but it is also not a decision-making body for the pilot projects.

#### **Progress since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention**

8. The programme of pilot projects includes different types of pilot projects: on the one hand, a limited number of pilot projects are directly supported by the Water Convention secretariat in cooperation with partners (category I projects). On the other hand, it is expected that additional pilot projects will be set up directly by countries or other organizations which will be part of the pilot projects programme and the platform for exchanging experience (category II projects). These projects can also be presented at and receive advice from the Task Force on Water and Climate, but only receive very limited support from the Water Convention secretariat.

9. The Task Force is invited to discuss how to facilitate these pilot projects and how to integrate them in the overall programme and platform for exchanging experience. Questions for discussion:

- Which projects are part of the programme as category II projects?
- How can the Task Force best play its advisory role?
- Do you have specific comments on the 3 category I projects (see project descriptions in the annex)?

10. For the category I projects, UNECE countries and transboundary basins were invited to submit proposals for pilot projects by end of December 2009. Preparations for 3 pilot projects have started in Spring 2010. Most pilot projects supported directly by the UNECE secretariat are implemented and funded in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) and are implemented in cooperation with other ENVSEC partner organizations as well as local partners. These projects are the following<sup>2</sup>:

- a) Pilot project on the Chu Talas Basin, shared by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNECE and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

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<sup>2</sup> More information is included in the annex.

- b) Pilot project on the Dniester Basin, shared by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, implemented by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UNECE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- c) Pilot project on the Sava river basin, shared by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia, implemented by the International Sava River Basin Commission and UNECE.

11. The duration of the pilot projects will vary from basin to basin depending on the focus of the project, the available resources, the countries involved, etc. Projects are expected to last between two and four years.

12. The ENVSEC partners – UNDP, UNEP, OSCE and the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) – are partners in the programme of pilot projects. In addition, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is also a partner in the programme in an advisory role, in particular in the phases related to impact assessment, modelling and scenario elaboration. Other international and non-governmental organizations working on climate change adaptation such as the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the RECs in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate and many others are invited to cooperate in the programme and the platform for exchanging experience.

13. The following indicative time frame is envisaged:

Up to September 2010	Project preparations: negotiations on the focus and modalities of pilot projects, exchange of formal letters or signing of memoranda of understanding.
10-12 May 2010	Kick-off workshops for pilot projects, back-to-back with the third meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate Change
7-9 July 2010	Fifth meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, short presentation and discussion of the pilot projects
Summer 2010-end of 2012	Implementation of the pilot projects, exchanges of experience through website, newsletters and regular meetings. Annual meetings of all pilot projects back-to-back with meetings of the Task Force on Water and Climate Change
Summer 2010-autumn 2011	Impact assessment phase for all pilot projects: baseline study, modelling, scenario development, vulnerability assessment
12-14 April 2011	Fourth Meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate, exchange of experience between pilot projects and other similar initiatives
3-4 May 2011	Sixth meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, short presentation and discussion of the pilot projects
Spring/ Summer 2011	Preparation of an input on the pilot projects programme for the Astana Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”
21-23 September 2011	Seventh Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in Astana, Kazakhstan, presentation of progress of the pilot projects (form to be discussed)
Autumn 2011-Autumn 2012	Implementation phase of the pilot projects: elaboration of a joint programme of measures
Middle/end of 2012	Review of progress and of completed pilot projects at the meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management as well as at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention

14. A detailed timeframe for each of the pilot projects will be developed in each project.

## **Annex: Description of each pilot project**

### **A) Promoting Cooperation to Adapt to Climate Change in the Chu and Talas Transboundary Basin**

The project aims to improve the adaptive capacity of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, to support dialogue and cooperation on the needed steps to design an adaptation strategy in the transboundary context and thereby prevent controversy on the use of water resources.

In 2006, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have established a bilateral transboundary water commission in and agreed upon water-sharing agreement and relevant tools for costs compensation. These cooperative arrangements might, however, be put at risk in the future by the possible negative impacts of climate change on water resources in the basin leading towards the need to re-consider current cooperation.

The specific objectives of the project will be:

- Modelling of the possible changes in water resources of the Chu-Talas basin associated with climate conditions and elaboration of joint scenarios,
- Preparation of joint vulnerability assessment, focusing on selected areas/sectors of importance for the work of the Commission,
- Development of a package of possible adaptation measures and relevant procedures for the Commission, which may contribute to decreasing potential tensions over changing hydrological regimes. Such procedures and measures will be built into the regular Commission's operations and policies, where appropriate.

As a first step, a baseline study will be conducted to identify and assess already ongoing or completed projects and national and international initiatives as well as existing data and impact assessments. This will be done through interviews with officials, initial data collection, contact with other previous and ongoing projects, etc. Depending on the results of the baseline study, subsequently, the collected data and information will be processed and used as a basis for developing an agreed upon impact assessment, based on joint scenarios and modelling. Based on the results as well as further information, a vulnerability assessment will be carried out in order to identify the most vulnerable areas, economic activities, ecosystems and population groups. The focus of the vulnerability assessment will be designed taking into account the work of the Chu-Talas Commission.

Based on the results of the vulnerability assessment, adaptation measures, their financing and implementation will be planned jointly with the riparian states, including financing aspects. If possible, contacts to relevant donor institutions will be established. At the same time, the opportunity and options for adapting the Commission's procedures to allow coping with climate change impacts will be discussed and agreed upon so to integrate project findings into the regular commission activities.

#### **Partners**

Facilitating organizations: UNDP (Ms. Natalia Alexeeva and Mr. Amirkhan Kenshimov), UNECE (Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Mr. Bo Libert and Ms. Francesca Bernardini) and OSCE (Ms. Saba Nordstrom)  
Countries: Kazakhstan: Committee of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture  
Kyrgyzstan: Water Agency, Ministry of Natural Resources  
Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission

Project duration: 3 years, Start: Jan 2010, End: Dec 2012

## **B) Reducing vulnerability to extreme floods and climate change in the Dniester river basin**

The project aims to reduce risks from climate change - and specifically flooding - for security by improving the adaptive capacity of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. More specifically, the project aims to expand and further strengthen cooperative management in the Dniester River basin to address cross-border management of floods, taking into account both current climate variability and long-term impacts of climate change on flood risks.

The Dniester river is shared by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. The Dniester in the Republic of Moldova also delimits the region of Transnistria. The initial phase of the UNECE- and OSCE-led Dniester basin cooperation project in 2005-6 produced a comprehensive assessment of the situation in the basin. Phase II, incorporated into ENVSEC, started in Summer 2006 and focussed on developing institutional and legal arrangements for joint basin management between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, with the aim to promote a legal agreement and develop an Action Programme of spin-off activities developed and agreed with the countries in 2007-8. The Programme promoted further development and implementation of legal mechanisms for basin cooperation; strengthening monitoring of water-related risks to public health; facilitation of cooperation on protecting the basin's biodiversity; increasing public awareness of basin-wide water and environmental issues; improving basin-wide exchange of water and environmental information. A joint Geographic Information System shared by the riparian states (including the Transnistrian region) was established and regular exchange of environmental information initiated. The pilot project will be carried out as part of the overall Dniester III project.

As a first step, ongoing or completed projects and national and international initiatives as well as existing data and impact assessments regarding climate change and flooding will be identified and assessed. Subsequently, the collected data and information will be processed and used as a basis for developing an agreed upon assessment of climate change impacts, with a special focus on flood problems. This will be done based on joint scenarios and modelling. Modelling and scenario building will help to assess climate change impacts, in particular on the occurrence, frequency and magnitude of extreme floods. Based on the results as well as further information, a vulnerability assessment will be carried out with a special focus on floods in order to identify the most vulnerable areas, economic activities, ecosystems and population groups. Different types of flood risk maps will be produced depending on the needs of the users and the data available, i.e. flood hazard maps and vulnerability or risk maps which will help in the prioritization of measures and areas for further action. Based on the results of the vulnerability assessment, further adaptation and especially flood risk reduction measures will be identified, prioritized and planned jointly by the riparian States, including financing aspects.

Moreover the project will support ongoing efforts in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to improve monitoring and forecasts of transboundary floods through the strengthening of the joint system for automated flow monitoring and data exchange (4- 6 new automated flow monitoring stations and data exchange infrastructure). Furthermore, capacity-building on flood alerts and flood communication will be provided through a workshop for national and local experts, the production of local early warning plans, and information material for the general population.

### **Partners:**

Facilitating organizations: OSCE (Ms. Tamara Kutonova), UNECE (Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Mr. Bo Libert, and Ms. Francesca Bernardini) and UNEP (Mr. Nikolai Denisov)

Countries: Ukraine and Republic of Moldova, Plenipotentiaries, Dniester III project stakeholders, Ministries of Environment in both countries, State Water Committee in Ukraine

Project duration: 3 years, Start: Jan 2010, End: Dec 2012

### **C) Building the link between flood risk management planning and climate change assessment in the Sava River Basin**

The project aims to support further expansion and strengthening of collaboration in the Sava River basin, to address transboundary management of floods, specifically taking into account impacts of climate change on flood risk management.

Since the establishment of the Sava Commission, flood management has been one of the main fields of cooperation of the Sava countries. In order to further strengthen the cooperation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia and Republic of Slovenia (the Parties to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB)), recently developed and initiated **Protocol on flood protection to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin**. The Protocol provides a starting point for step-by-step development of a common **Flood risk management plan** (FRMP), in accordance with the EU Flood Directive (2007/60/EU) and in line with the UNECE Water Convention. The climate change issue has been recognized and emphasized in the preamble of the Protocol. Recognizing the likely consequences of climate change on the water regime on the Sava River Basin and the need for effective adaptation measures, it is expected that the common FRMP shall take into account climate change impacts as well as various vulnerabilities of society, economy and environment.

This project should complement and support the joint activities of the Parties already started in the framework of the Sava Commission. Links will be established with the ongoing projects in the Sava river basin (Water and Climate Adaptation Plan for the Sava River Basin (WATCAP project), Sava RBM Plan preparation project, etc.) and the Danube river basin related activities, in order to secure a synergy towards common goals.

The main activities that will be performed during the course of the project are:

- Preparation of the overview of already completed or ongoing activities regarding the flood risk management planning in the Sava river basin (Sava river basin FAP, etc.), and in the Danube river basin (being relevant for the Sava river basin);
- Identification and assessment of existing legislation, strategies and plans related to FRM planning and climate change adaptation (transboundary and national) in the Sava basin;
- Assessment of data and information needs for preparation of joint FRMP for the Sava river basin and identification of data sources on national and international level,
- Initial flood vulnerability assessment of the Sava river basin and identification of the most vulnerable areas;
- Assessment if additional modelling of climate change impact on flood vulnerability is needed (starting point are WATCAP results),
- Preliminary identification of possible adaptation measures (costs, effectiveness, side effects, vulnerability reduction, feasibility of implementation, alternatives etc.);
- Preparation of a detailed Program for preparation of the first Flood risk management plan
- Sharing relevant experiences with other pilot projects under the framework of the UNECE Water Convention's platform for exchanging experience on transboundary cooperation

#### **Partners**

Facilitating organizations: International Sava River Basin Commission (Mr. Dragan Zeljko and Mr. Dejan Komatina), UNECE (Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Ms. Francesca Bernardini and Mr. Bo Libert)

Local partners: National institutions of the Parties (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia), responsible for the FASRB implementation

Project duration: 2.5 years, Start: June 2010, End: December 2012

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