



Convention on the Protection and Use of
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment
Eleventh meeting
Geneva, 6–7 July 2010
Item 12 of the provisional agenda

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management
Fifth meeting
Geneva, 7–9 July 2010
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
International Water Assessment Centre

**PROGRESS REPORT AND FUTURE WORK
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT CENTRE
(Period January -June 2010)**

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) is the Convention's collaborative centre on monitoring and assessment and integrated resources management and a support tool for the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its Protocols. IWAC is hosted at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute. The Draft Strategy and Workplan for 2010-2012 of IWAC was approved by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its fifth session on 10-12 November 2009 in Geneva (ECE/MP.WAT/29/Add.2).
2. The implementation of the workplan depends, among other issues, on the commitment of partner countries and institutions and on availability of resources for the foreseen activities. The support of the Slovak Government as well as some other donors was ensured for the activities of IWAC for the year 2010. In addition, some inter-linkages with other ongoing projects and activities were initialized to develop synergies in relevant transboundary cooperation.
3. This document aims to inform the Working Groups about the work carried out by IWAC since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties and to present future plans, including proposals for some additional future activities. The Working Groups are invited to comment on the ongoing and future activities of IWAC and to discuss how IWAC can work most effectively for the benefit of the Convention and its Parties supporting the implementation of the Convention.

II. ACTIVITIES OF IWAC SINCE THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

1. Projects

1.1 New Pilot projects on Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters

4. The funding of the project “Capacity building in data administration for assessing and monitoring transboundary water resources in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)” approved by Meeting of the Parties, was confirmed by the French Global Environment Fund (FFEM). After analysis of the pre-selected basins, the two pilot areas retained for the project are: the Dniester River Basin, shared by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova and Basins of the Aral Sea (Amu Darya and Syr Darya river basins) shared by the 5 countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan) and Afghanistan.

5. IWAC is assisting in the preparation and implementation of the pilot project. The component for the regional activities will be undertaken by IWAC within which it is especially planned to:

- put online the 1st regional catalogue exploiting information from the 2 pilot areas;
- produce a summary document underlining the experience in the 2 areas;
- carry out actions for communication and dissemination of the results (presentation leaflets, side events during the conference of Astana, etc...)

6. IWAC is also assisting in the programme of pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, especially in the pilot project on the Dniester basin. IWAC participated in the Dniester III meeting in Odessa on 7-9 June 2010 as well as in the first meeting of the new Working Group on Flood Management and Climate Change. IWAC's exact role in the programme of pilot projects still needs to be defined, based on the needs.

1.2 Ongoing projects carried out by other organizations

7. In order to develop synergy and cross-fertilization of different projects for supporting implementation of the Convention, IWAC is also facilitating inter-linkage among some initiatives on transboundary waters in the UNECE region. IWAC is hosted in the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute (SHMI) (IWAC is not a legal body), that is why SHMI is legally partner for cooperation with other institutions also in activities which are developed and implemented by IWAC.

8. The Danube basin cooperation is the main source of experiences and ongoing activities used for dissemination in other Water Convention regions by IWAC. Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and some South Eastern European countries are also Danube countries participating in the work of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The goal of IWAC is to extend this cooperation outside the Danube basin in transboundary context in these countries.

9. For the Tisza river basin (Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Serbia) the Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan is under preparation in which also water quantity including flood and drought management (and climate change) is considered. The work is coordinated by the Tisza Group

of the ICPDR co-chaired by the representative of the European Commission. The UNDP/GEF/ICPDR project “Integrating multiple benefits of wetlands and floodplains into improved transboundary management for the Tisza River Basin” is facilitating the preparation of the plan. This project is supporting transboundary cooperation between Ukraine, Slovakia and Hungary via the project “Making space of water in the Bodrog River Basin”, in which the Global Water Partnership Slovakia and SHMI (IWAC) play a leading role.

10. Concerning flood protection there are several activities such as: WMO/GWP project “Phase II Pilot Project in Central and Eastern Europe under the Framework of the Associated Program on Flood Management APFM” with Slovakia, Poland, Romania (SHMI Lead Partner); EU Interrreg project MOSES “Improvement of the Flood Management System” with Slovakia, Germany, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary (SHMI Lead Partner). Since November 2009 SHMI (IWAC) is leading a new NATO Project in the Program “Science for Peace” “Flood Monitoring and Forecast in Pripyat River Basin” where in Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus institutions on national and regional level are cooperating. Extension to the training activities of operational services in the Pripyat basin is under preparation by IWAC. The corresponding support from the side of the Government of Slovakia is available.

11. The UNDP/GEF project “Integration of Ecosystem Management Principles and Practices in Land Management Principles and Practices into Land and Water management of Laborec-Uh regions” 2008-2013, directed by SHMI (IWAC), transboundary basin of Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary.

12. SHMI (IWAC) is closely cooperating with GWP CEE and GWP Slovakia in several activities – national dialogues, IWRM, sanitation of small villages and minorities, public participation, stakeholder involvement.

13. Following various Danube activities, Slovenia is leading in the preparation of the EU SEE regional project “Sustainable management of natural assets and protected areas along international river corridors in SEE countries” in which Austria, Italy, Slovakia and all Balkan countries including Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova are participating. The project is in the second stage of evaluation. IWAC (SHMI) is leading one work package on Public participation and dissemination of results.

II. Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters

14. IWAC is playing an important role in the preparation of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters, both in terms of substantial and practical assistance to the secretariat.

15. For the subregional assessment for the Caucasus IWAC is currently assisting in the finalization of the Assessment texts. Concerning the subregional assessment of Eastern and Northern Europe, IWAC supported the development of preparatory materials for example through pre-filling datasheets. IWAC was responsible for the organization of the subregional workshop on 27-29 April 2010 in Kiev “Workshop on Transboundary Water Resources Management in Eastern Europe”. Meeting costs (travel and accommodation costs of eligible participants, rental of venue, translation of material and interpretation as well as preparation through a local organizer; Mama-86) were covered from the regular IWAC budget. IWAC is cooperating with the Water Convention Secretariat in revising and finalizing the text of the sub-regional assessment.

16. IWAC is also preparing to co-organize the next sub-regional workshops in Central Asia (October 2010) and Western Europe (during EU Hungary Presidency in 2011).

III. Sharing of experience and capacity building.

3.1 Trainings

17. The role of the IWAC is to facilitate organization of thematic trainings responding countries needs. The trainings should promote implementation of the set of guidelines developed under the auspices of the Water Convention. The preparation of several training events is running. As an extension of the NATO project “Flood Monitoring and Forecast in Pripyat River Basin” a training of the operational staff of regional and national services will be organized in Slovakia and in the basin in hydrological and meteorological monitoring, real time measurement and information processing, forecasting and evaluation. Support for the project is available from the side of Government of Slovakia. Several other ideas are under negotiation.

3.2 Internet site

18. Until now only passive maintenance of the IWAC Internet site is operated. Exchange of knowledge, and sharing the information and opinions via a “discussion forum” is expected.

3.3 Exchange of experience

19. Based on the experience gained in the first round of preparation of River Basin Management Plans in accordance with the European Union Water Framework Directive (EU WFD) in EU member countries in 2009, IWAC is working in preparation of the following activities:

- exchange of information between member countries, including on several “difficult” themes such as economy, inter-calibration, water assessment, exemptions, priority substances
- exchange of experience in the implementation of the EU Floods Directive and in drought management
- addressing gaps related to climate change in river management planning
- dissemination of experience in implementation of the EU WFD to countries with economies in transition, in particular countries sharing the Danube River Basin and countries in South-Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

Corresponding activities (workshops, website discussions) are under preparation.

20. Following the earlier cooperation IWAC organized the workshop on harmonization of assessment methods of hydro-morphological quality elements on 16-17 November 2009 in Tatranska Lomnica in Slovakia with participation of representatives from Belarus, Ukraine and Slovakia. Several ideas for future cooperation were discussed.

21. IWAC is cooperating with the Global Water Partnership (mainly CEE and CACENA regions) in the preparation of the Astana Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, especially related to public participation and dissemination.

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

22. The work of IWAC is organized according to the actual workplan and additional activities that are requested by the Water Convention bodies. Some other activities and proposals are put forward for discussion and possible inclusion into the existing workplan for 2010-2012.

23. SHMI is playing database centre role in the work of Danube cooperation coordinated by ICPDR. SHMI is collecting, processing and evaluating information from the Transnational Monitoring Network including preparation of yearbooks. IWAC (SHMI) can play also role of database centre for Water Convention transboundary basins in the UNECE region. The support of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic and SHMI is proposed for this activity with the aim of longer term orientation. The staff of SHMI can play this role under the management of the IWAC in the internal organization of the work. This database can include also information from Assessment activities both on general and scientific level and/or other Water Convention projects and programmes.

24. In relation to this, the new pilot project “Capacity building in data administration for assessing and monitoring transboundary water resources in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)” will be implemented in two international basins in Dniester and Aral Sea. IWAC can facilitate the dissemination of these results in other regions. The project has also a regional component in supporting IWAC to operate a regional catalogue exploiting information from the 2 pilot areas. The new proposal is that IWAC can operate this catalogue in the future after ending of the French project with covering of costs from the IWAC budget. IWAC can organize also fund-raising for other transboundary basins for inclusion into the regional system.

25. In the preparation of further actions IWAC has reached consensus with relevant partners to propose the following ideas as additional projects. Because of small experiences and available sources these projects proposals are “small sized”. The support from Slovakia is available and only participation and in-kind contribution is expected from other partners’ side, for the following proposals:

- Harmonization of assessment methods of hydro-morphological quality elements - Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Slovakia (and possibly Russian Federation)
- Training of the operational staff of regional and national hydrological services in Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia
- Preparation of hydrological operating system and forecasting system in the Irtysh river – Kazakhstan and Slovakia (with inclusion of China and Russian Federation during the project).
