



## **Progress Report on the Rivers Pilots November 2001 to October 2002**

### **1. Introduction**

The programme of pilot projects on the monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers is part of the work programme for 2000-2003 under the Water Convention. There are five such projects being undertaken directly within the Core Group (Bug, Morava, Mures/Maros, Ipeľ/Ipoly and Latorica-Uzh), and four additional projects (Kura, Severski Donets, Pripyat and Tobol), which are being separately organised and funded through the European Union's Tacis programme. There are three main objectives of the UN ECE pilot projects:

- to *demonstrate* the implementation of the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers
- to *support* countries in their implementation
- to *learn* from the implementation of the guidelines to assist in their review and improvement.

Previous meetings of the WGMA have considered and evaluated the work in the pilot projects and made observations, recommendations and decisions about the programme. The views and recommendations of the last meeting of the WGMA are summarised in section 2 below.

Section 3 provides information about the progress during the past year, and section 4 gives an indication of the work programme for the coming year.

### **2. Recommendations of the second meeting of the WGMA (Vääksy, 2001)**

At the time of the second meeting, progress had been rather slow, and the WGMA strongly urged the participating countries to maintain an active role in the programme of pilot projects, at the same time commending the lead country for its role in helping to ensure progress was being made. The members of the WGMA endorsed the three objectives outlined above, and also expressed the hope that implementation of the pilot projects would lead to a general strengthening of cooperation between riparian countries.

### **3. Pilot project activities**

#### ***3.1 Summary of previous project activities***

Inception reports (Report No 1) for each of the five pilot projects selected by the Core Group for implementation of the guidelines were produced and published as outputs from the Task Force on Monitoring and Assessment under the Convention. Separate working reports were completed, either at a country or river basin level for several components of the assessment process. These included an inventory of human activities in the basin, compilation and evaluation of existing legislation, information needs, surveys of water quality and strategies for monitoring and

assessment. The essential next step was to put these together into a consistent series of reports for each basin, a so-called Synthesis report (Report No 2) and Recommendations (Report No 3).

Workshops for the authors from participating countries, together with advisers from the lead country, were held on information needs in December 2000 and synthesis in June 2001. At the latter, it was agreed by the participants that results of the five pilot projects would be presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference in April 2002 in Poland. It was an ambitious task to meet the deadline, given the delays that had been experienced in project implementation up to that time, and implied that the reports would need to be finished by the end of 2001.

### ***3.2 Activities of the core group since the last meeting of the WGMA***

Work continued during the autumn and there were two small meetings of authors with the project manager in October and November. The planned writing and editing workshop of all the authors of the pilot project reports took place in Budapest at the end of January 2002. The intention was to review the final content of the synthesis reports for the Bug, Morava and Mures/Maros and if possible the Ipel/Ipoly, to develop an outline and discuss the contents of the recommendations reports, and to prepare presentations on the pilot projects for the Miedzyzdroje conference. The draft synthesis reports for the first three mentioned pilot projects were reviewed and after some discussion became "Identification and Review of Water Management Issues". A common introductory chapter was developed at the meeting, together with the outline for the recommendations report. The timetable leading to printing of the reports in time for the conference was agreed.

With a very intensive response from the pilot project authors, the reports were completed in time, and with the assistance of some short last-minute visits to the countries by the project leader, a lot of work on editing of both content and English, and major efforts from the Polish team, the reports for the Bug, Morava and Mures/Maros were edited, laid out and printed just in time for the conference. Immediately after the conference, some corrections were made, and three hundred and fifty copies were produced of each, and have been distributed initially to the authors and to those others who had assisted in the projects and the editing process.

Following the agreements made at the Budapest meeting, several presentations were made on the work of the pilot projects at the conference:

- UN ECE pilot projects on transboundary rivers: introduction and lessons learned. Martin Adriaanse, IWAC, Netherlands
- Bug surveys: an initiation of transboundary co-operation. Malgorzata Landsberg-Ucziwek and Teresa Zan, Voivodeship Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland
- Different approaches in risk assessment for hot spots identification. Juliana Adamkova, Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute
- Criteria for assessment between countries. Ferenc Laszlo, Vituki, Hungary
- How close are we in the EC Water Framework Directive's implementation? Paul Frintrop, RIZA, Netherlands.

The Budapest meeting also agreed a timetable for completion of draft recommendations reports, and agreed that first drafts would be discussed at a meeting of the core group for pilots back to back with the conference at Miedzyzdroje. In practice, they were not ready, and a short meeting of the pilot project core group within the conference agreed a timetable for their preparation, and the suggestion was made to hold a core group meeting instead associated with the WGMA

meeting in the autumn. At this time, the project leader since the beginning of the pilots, Martin Adriaanse of RIZA joined UNEP, and John Chilton of the British Geological Survey took over responsibility as project leader on behalf of the lead country, with the intention that the remaining reports on all five pilot projects would be completed by early 2003.

Work on the draft recommendations reports was taken up again during the summer. A first draft for the Bug was completed in August 2002 and for the Morava and Mures/Maros in September. The first draft of the reports on Water Management Issues for the Ipel'/Ipoly and Latorica-Uzh were also completed in September.

The meeting of the rivers core group to work on the recommendations reports thus took place in Helsinki immediately before this meeting of the WGMA (30 September to 2 October). Participants from all five pilot projects and representing all countries with the exception of Ukraine worked hard for two and a half days in plenary and in project groups, supported by advisers from the lead country, to analyse and evaluate the existing transboundary monitoring and assessment practices in their river basin and to agree on recommendations for improved approaches where necessary. For the Ipel'/Ipoly and the Latorica/Uzh, it was agreed that the two intended reports on i) water management issues and ii) recommendations would be combined for each pilot project. Timetables for report completion were agreed.

#### **4. Future activities**

##### ***4.1 Report completion***

Preparation of the five reports by the pilot project teams will continue in the next three to four months. Specific dates, ranging from the end of October to the end of November 2002, were agreed for the completion of the revised drafts. The revised drafts will be reviewed rapidly by the project leader and supporting advisers, with the intention of having the reports completed from a content point of view by early December for approval by the relevant authorities in each basin. Final editing of English and layout will be undertaken January for printing very early in 2003.

##### ***4.2 Evaluation of lessons learned***

In the final plenary discussion of the pilot project workshop, two further issues were raised. Firstly, it was suggested and agreed by the participants that activities should not cease with the printing of the reports. There was a need for the rivers core group to meet in an evaluation workshop, to bring forward and discuss the lessons learnt with respect to the use of the rivers guidelines in their projects. Otherwise the experience gained in relation to this key objective of the pilot projects could be lost. Several participants pointed out that, up to now, at all meetings they had been under such pressure from the need to complete the reports that there had not been time to reflect properly on the lessons learnt. After some discussion, it was suggested that a specific evaluation workshop was required soon after report completion, ie in the spring of 2003. It was further suggested that the outcome of this workshop could be developed into presentations that could be made at a specific session within the Monitoring Tailormade Workshop scheduled for the autumn of 2003.

##### ***4.3 Links with the Tacis projects***

Secondly, the question of the link between the five completed UN ECE pilot projects, the pilots core group and the four Tacis basins was raised. A summary report on progress to date of the EU Tacis project has been prepared. The four pilot projects involve the following countries:

Kura	Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan
Severski-Donets	Russia and Ukraine
Tobol	Kazakhstan and Russia
Pripyat	Ukraine and Belarus

The overall goal of the EU Tacis project covering these is to support the prevention, control and reduction of adverse transboundary pollution impact caused by the quality of water in the four rivers. A specific objective of the projects is to contribute to the development of the UN ECE guidelines for the monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters through pilot projects on the four rivers. The project commenced in January 2002 and is scheduled to last two years. Many delays have been experienced, but a single joint project inception report has been produced, with annexes for each basin containing specific material. Considering that the five pilot projects directly under the UN ECE rivers core group are coming to an end and will have completed their reporting early in 2003 as outlined above, a mechanism for establishing and continuing contact between the Tacis project and this core group should be developed. The participants expressed their willingness to cooperate and to share their experiences if such a mechanism could be developed.

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