

ECE Regional Advisory Activities

Environment

Background

All activities of the Regional Adviser of Environment are linked to UNECE core programmes and expertise, and implemented in close cooperation with the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division. The focus of regional advisory activities is to facilitate the development of environmental cooperation between ECE member States. This work is in line with the reform of the UNECE, which emphasized the need to increase efforts on policy implementation, in particular in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), and South-East Europe.

The projects and activities build on demands from member States to support the implementation of the five UNECE Environmental Conventions. It is also an objective to enhance synergies between the Conventions in the field. In this regard, the direct collaboration with country authorities is important. The projects are set up to achieve such results as new bilateral agreements, strengthened national programmes for policy implementation, improved national legislation etc.

Most of the activities are developed and implemented in cooperation with other international organizations. The Initiative on Environment and Security (ENVSEC) with OSCE, UNDP and UNEP is a framework used for some projects. This cooperation helps to achieve important synergies such as more efficient fund-raising, strengthened cooperation with local offices, and improved complementarity in terms of expertise and access to national authorities.

While the UN funds the Regional Adviser and its travel budget, projects can only be implemented with the support of extra-budgetary contributions. ECE member States have so far responded positively to the funding requests of the Secretariat. Important donors are Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and the US. The UN Development Account is another important source of funding (see the CAPACT project below).

Main directions of work

- Projects in **Central Asia**. Over the past years contacts have been developed with authorities in the region (water as well as environmental authorities), NGOs, sub-regional organisations and also donors. Several projects contribute towards the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Rational and Efficient Use of Water and Energy Resources in Central Asia, developed under the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). Examples of on-going and planned projects are:
 - (i) “Capacity Building for Air Quality Management and the Application of Clean Coal Combustion Technologies in Central Asia” (CAPACT), funded from the UN Development Account and implemented in collaboration with UNESCAP (see: www.unece.org/ie/capact/). The project that aims to facilitate ratification and implementation of Air Convention Protocols in Central Asia will be finalised in the 2007.
 - (ii) Central Asian Regional Water Information Base (CAREWIB), funded by SDC, Switzerland and implemented in collaboration with UNEP and the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination for Central Asia (see: www.cawater-

- [info.net/index_e.htm](#)). The project has been completed in 2007. A follow-up project is being prepared.
- (iii) A regional project on dam safety in Central Asia within the SPECA framework started in April 2006 with funding provided by Finland (see: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety.htm>).
 - (iv) A project supporting the implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Convention in a Transboundary Context started in January 2006. Funding for this project is provided by Norway (see: http://www.unece.org/env/eia/central_asia.htm).
- Projects involving **the EECCA region**. Examples of on-going or planned projects are:
 - (i) Capacity for Water Cooperation (CWC), a three years training and networking project for all EECCA countries focusing on capacity building for transboundary water cooperation. Two workshops are planned for 2007 and 2008 (see: www.unece.org/env/water/cwc.htm). The project is funded from different sources.
 - (ii) Development of the transboundary cooperation and sustainable management of the Dniester River. A second project phase funded by Sweden in collaboration with OSCE will be completed in autumn 2007 (see: www.dniester.org/).
 - (iii) National implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management within the framework of the EU Water Initiative. With funding from the European Commission this work is under-way in Moldova and Armenia.
 - Water projects in **South East Europe (SEE)** aiming to promote the development of transboundary water cooperation. The following projects are planned:
 - (i) Support to Serbia to ratify the Water Convention.
 - (ii) Raising awareness and creating a baseline for future work by producing an assessment and a publication on transboundary water cooperation in SEE.

More detailed information on Regional Adviser's main goals and activities for 2007-2008 can be accessed [here](#).

Main achievements

The following are examples of substantial results achieved through the implementation of ECE regional advisory activities on environment:

- A bilateral Commission on the Use of Water Management Facilities on the Rivers Chu and Talas shared by Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan was established in 2006.
- A Protocol of Understanding between Ukraine and Moldova was signed in 2005 aiming to improve the transboundary cooperation in the Dniester river basin. An action programme for the development of transboundary cooperation between Moldova and Ukraine has been developed.
- An air quality monitoring station is being established in Kazakhstan. The station will be functional from September 2007. Kazakhstan has developed and approved a national programme for air quality management.
- A Central Asian Regional Water Information Base (CAREWIB) has been established.
- The EIA Convention in a Transboundary Context has been implemented in the framework of a pilot project between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

- A model national law and a regional cooperation agreement for dam safety in Central Asia has been developed and approved by representatives from authorities of the Central Asian states.
- Capacity building activities on international cooperation on air quality management and transboundary water cooperation have been carried out in the framework of the projects “Capacity Building for Water Cooperation” and “Capacity Building for Air Quality Management and the Application of Clean Coal Combustion Technologies in Central Asia”. More than 300 national experts received training in the framework of 9 capacity building workshops and seminars, organised by the Regional Adviser.
- Technical cooperation activities, implemented by the Regional Adviser on Environment, contributed to member States’ increased preparedness to ratify and implement UNECE environmental Conventions and Protocols (on the whole, more than 60 new ratifications of and accessions to ECE legally binding instruments in the field of environment have been registered in 2005-2007).