



European Union Water Initiative Plus for the
Eastern Partnership Countries (EUWI+)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL INTERAGENCY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE EUWI+ IN BELARUS

5 December 2018, Hotel "Willing", Minsk, Lenina st, 50



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Abbreviations

DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Commission
EECCA	Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia
EU	European Union
EU-MS	EU-Member States
EUWI+	European Union Water Initiative Plus
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
NFP	National Focal Point
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPD	National Policy Dialogue
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
SCM	Steering Committee Meeting (of the EU Action EUWI+)
SEIS	Shared Environmental Information System
TA	Technical Assistance
ToR	Terms of References
UBA	Umweltbundesamt GmbH, Environment Agency Austria
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Participants of the first meeting of the National Interagency Steering Committee of the European Union Water Initiative Plus were welcomed by Mr. Khmel, Mr. Stravinskis and Mr. Mamadzhanov.

The objective of the first meeting of the National Interagency Steering Committee of the European Union Water Initiative Plus programme was to discuss progress and next steps in implementing the European Union Water Initiative Plus (EUWI+) programme.

In accordance with the approved agenda, the discussions took place around several topics:

1. Ms. Dubenok presented information regarding the **Draft National Strategy for Water Resources Management in the context of climate change for the period until 2030**. It was noted that the document was developed by the experts from CRICUWR with the support of OECD in the framework of the component 1 of the EUWI+ programme. The document was discussed by all government stakeholders; and it was noted that in order to approve it in accordance with the national legislation a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) needs to be developed, the preparation thereof is planned to be carried out with the support of UNECE under the EUWI+ programme.

2. Mr. Sutter then presented a brief **overview of the regional EUWI+ programme**. It was noted that the EUWI+ programme is a continuation of previous EUWI projects implemented by UNECE and OECD, and other projects financed by EU for example the Environmental Protection of International River Basins project.

The EUWI+ programme is mainly funded by the EU and is implemented in 6 Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The duration of the programme is 4 years.

The overall objective of the programme is to improve integrated water resources management in the Eastern Partnership countries, especially in relation to transboundary rivers. The programme includes 3 components:

- improvement of legal and regulatory systems in the Eastern Partnership countries in accordance with the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive and Integrated Water Resources Management.
- development and implementation of river basin management plans based on the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive.
- systematic analysis of the progress and results of the programme, communication, and raising stakeholders' and public awareness of the programme.

One million Euro is allocated for the Republic of Belarus for procuring equipment, consumables and training of employees of the monitoring laboratories. At present, contracts for the equipment supply are being under a signing process between the subordinate organisations of the Ministry of Environment of Belarus and the Environment Agency Austria.

3. Ms. Slizh presented information regarding the **national priorities under the EUWI+ programme**, namely activities envisaged under the programme for 2019. In addition, a list of additional pilot projects for further implementation under the EUWI+ programme was proposed for consideration by the partners of the EUWI+ programme's implementation.

It was noted that the inclusion of the "Design of the Program of Integrated Environmental Monitoring in the area of development of the Khotislavskoye chalk deposit" in the list of pilot projects, on the basis of the existing program for surface and underground waters monitoring, is driven by the need to fulfil the order mandated by the 26th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Ukrainian joint Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation as of October 11, 2018.

Mr. Sutter noted that the proposed additional pilot projects are subject to scrutiny in terms of their compliance with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and the main activities of the EUWI+ programme, as well as in terms of the possibility of financing such projects within the budget of the EUWI+ programme.

4. Mr. Martusevich presented information regarding the **Preparatory activities of the EUWI+ programme in 2017 – 2018**. It was noted that workshops, development of methods for monitoring the SDG targets 6.3-6.5, an express analysis of the Kopylsky district and an assessment of the efficiency of water use in the Kopylsky district, as well as development of measures for rational water usage for the most water-intensive enterprises of the Kopylsky district have been carried out; the formulation of recommendations for improving drinking water supply systems in the Kopylsky district has been started. It was also mentioned that the meetings of experts from the Republic of Belarus with Lithuanian and Latvian colleagues have been organized to establish cooperation in the field of transboundary water management in the Neman and Western Dvina river basins under the component 1, with the support of OECD and UNECE.

5. Ms. Dubenok presented information regarding the **National reporting on SDG targets 6.3-6.5**, namely the organizational structure and the mechanism for introducing and implementing SDGs in the Republic of Belarus. It was noted that 7 SDGs out of 17 are relevant to the competency of the Ministry of Environment.

In the field of water resources management, the Ministry of Environment together with other governmental bodies is in charge of four targets 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 under SDG 6: "ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all". Two indicators are set under each target to measure progress on the target's implementation.

The work on the determination of national indicators for the targets 6.3-6.5 under SDG 6 and reporting mechanisms for monitoring their implementation has begun in April 2018 with the support of OECD. To date, international calculation methods have been applied to five indicators (6.3.1, 6.4.1, 6.4.2, 6.5.1, 6.5.2), and a national calculation method (proxy indicator) has been developed for one indicator (6.3.2.). It was noted that concerning the SDG targets 6.3-6.5, the challenge lies in the lack of approved methods in some neighbouring countries, as well as in the disunity of terms and definitions enshrined in international methods, resulting in complications of their implementation. In this regard, UNECE was requested to organize a workshop to discuss this issue with experts from neighbouring countries or invite experts from the Republic of Belarus to regional and global workshops to discuss the methodology for reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2.

It was indicated that the targets under SDG 6 assigned to the Ministry of Environment are also relevant to the competency of other governmental bodies. It was proposed that the National Strategic Committee of the Republic of Belarus makes changes in the structure of the responsible governmental bodies while adjusting the roadmap for achieving SDGs, taking into account the developed methods.

6. Ms. Drozdova and Mr. Mamadzhanov presented information regarding the **Implementation of the 1999 UNECE/WHO Europe Protocol on Water and Health** to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. It was noted there is a need to revise the targets under the Protocol on Water and Health set in 2013 in the Republic of Belarus. The meeting participants were informed about the revision of the composition of the Interdepartmental Council on the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health. It was noted that there will be a workshop held in Minsk on December 6, 2018 focused on updating the targets set under the Protocol on Water and Health.

7. Ms. Videnina presented information regarding the **Support for the development of river basin management plans and further operationalization of basin councils**, namely the work carried out in the framework of finalizing the Dnieper River Basin Management Plan, as well as the assistance in conducting meetings of the basin councils (Dnieper, Pripyat and West Bug). The speaker informed the participants about the completion of the tender and the appointment of the contractor (CRICUWR) to

work on the preparation of the management plan for the Pripjat river basin. Ms. Videnina highlighted a positive outcome gained from the lectures given by the experts of the EUWI+ programme to professors and graduates of BNTU in the field of water policy. She noted that Belarusian experts involved in the implementation of the activities of the EUWI+ programme demonstrated a high level of professionalism.

In addition, Mr. Korneev presented a **finalized draft management plan for the Dnieper river basin**.

A short video demonstrating the importance of basin councils' activities was shown to the participants.

8. Mr. Mamadzhanov and Mr. Korneev then presented information regarding the **Support to the development of transboundary cooperation with Latvia and Lithuania**, namely the cooperation between Belarusian and Lithuanian colleagues on the basin management plan for the Neman river. In particular, results of the final report on the development of the priority parts of the international Neman river basin management plan, prepared with the support of UNECE under the framework of EUWI+ programme, were presented.

Ms. Slizh informed the participants about **ongoing consultations with Latvia on the preparation of the draft Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Protection and Use of Transboundary Water Bodies**. Representatives from Belarus requested Mr. Mamadzhanov - the representative of the UNECE Secretariat to assist in identifying a contact person in Latvia to work further on the draft Agreement.

9. Mr. Martusevich, Mr. Bordenyuk and Ms. Zaharko presented information regarding the **Brief overview of water resources and water systems in the Kopylsky district of the Minsk Oblast**, including key findings and recommendations, along with the assessment of water use efficiency in the most water intensive enterprises. It was noted that the research carried out in the pilot area under of the EUWI+ programme should be continued with elaboration of specific recommendations (a list of required measures with implementation timeframe) on improving the household and drinking water supply system in the Kopylsky district.

10. Mr. Sutter presented information regarding the Investment opportunities and investment plans under the EUWI+ programme. It was noted that the late registration of the EUWI+ programme in the Republic of Belarus did not affect the work results this year. Mr. Sutter noted that the laboratories of the subordinate organizations of the Ministry of Environment are in a good condition, a level of professionalism of the experts is high, which allows to invest in procuring equipment under the EUWI+ programme.

11. Mr. Stankevich presented information regarding the equipment to be procured under the EUWI+ programme and national needs. It is noted that under the EUWI+ programme a funding equal to 390 thousand euro for the development of surface and groundwater monitoring is envisaged, and most of the funding is for procuring equipment for RCAC. The procedure for the equipment delivery to the Republic of Belarus was outlined. It was noted that in order to exempt the equipment from additional taxes a list of the procured equipment is necessary to register in the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus.

2 RESULTS AND DECISIONS

During the first meeting of the National Interagency Steering Committee of the European Union Water Initiative Plus programme it has been decided:

1. To recognize the work of the EUWI + programme in the Republic of Belarus in the reporting year as satisfactory.
2. To welcome the start of work on the revision of the targets set under the Protocol on Water and Health.
3. To continue the work on the development of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the draft National water strategy in the context of climate change for the period up to 2030.
4. The Ministry of Environment send a list of proposed additional pilot projects for implementation under the EUWI+ programme to the partners of the component 2 and 3 for their consideration by the 1st of January, 2019.
5. To pursue the work on the harmonization and approval of national methodologies for the targets 6.3-6.5 under SDG 6 in the framework of the programme.
6. To invite UNECE to consider organizing a workshop on the SDG indicator 6.5.2. with neighboring countries or inviting experts from the Republic of Belarus to regional and global workshops to discuss the methodology for reporting on the indicator.
7. To continue to develop specific recommendations (a list of required measures with implementation timeframe) on improving the household and drinking water supply systems in the Kopylsky district.

The minutes were drafted by Ms.Voronova.



3 ANNEXES

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

1ST MEETING OF THE NATIONAL INTERAGENCY STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE EUWI+ IN BELARUS

Minsk, 5 December 2018



Venue: Hotel Willing, Lenina Street 50, Minsk

(Languages: Russian and English with simultaneous interpretation)

The objectives of the meeting are:

- to discuss progress and next steps in implementing the European Water Initiative Plus (EUWI+) programme in Belarus and to receive feedback from national stakeholders;
- to discuss the role and future work of the Interagency Steering Committee.

8.30 – 9.00	REGISTRATION
9.00 - 9.30	Opening and welcoming statements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Andrei Khmel, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus, Chair of the Interagency Steering Committee of the EUWI+ - Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda• Tomas Stravinskas, EU Delegation to Belarus – welcoming statement• Alisher Mamadzhanov, UNECE - Welcoming remarks by EUWI+ Implementing Partners
9:30 – 10:30	OPENING SESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft national strategy for water resources management in the context of climate change for the period until 2030 - Representative of CRICUWR• Brief overview of the regional EUWI+ programme - EUWI+ team• Brief overview of the national priorities under the EUWI+ programme - Representative of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection• Q&A followed by discussion

10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break
SESSION 1	CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUWI+ TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL POLICY IN THE WATER SECTOR
11:00 –12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory activities of the EUWI+ in 2017-2018 - Representatives of OECD and UNECE • National reporting on the SDG indicators 6.3-6.5 - Representatives of CRICUWR and OECD • Implementation of the 1999 UNECE/WHO Europe Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes – A. Drazdova, Ministry of Health and A. Mamadzhanov, UNECE • Q&A followed by discussion
SESSION 2	RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT
12:00 –13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory activities of the EUWI+ in 2017-2018 - Representatives of the International Office for Water (France) • Support for the development of river basin management plans and further operationalization of basin councils – Yunona Videnina, International Office for Water (France) • Support to the development of transboundary cooperation with Latvia and Lithuania - A. Mamadzhanov, UNECE • Q&A followed by discussion
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch break
SESSION 3	PILOT MEASURES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL (IN THE KOPYLSKYI DISTRICT)
14:00 –15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express survey of water resources and water systems in the Kopylskyi district of Minsk Oblast – A. Martusevich, OECD and project experts V. Bordeniuc and P. Zakharko, CRICUWR (<i>tbc</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key findings and recommendations for a draft Action Plan, and - Assessment of water use efficiency for the most water intensive enterprises, key finding and recommendations • Q&A followed by discussion. Comments from the administration of the Kopylskyi district
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee break
SESSION 4	LABORATORIES DEVELOPMENT AND SURFACE WATER AND GROUND WATER MONITORING

15:30 –16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory activities of the EUWI+ in 2017-2018 – Michael Sutter, Environment Agency Austria • Investment opportunities and investment plans under the EUWI+ - M. Sutter, Environment Agency Austria • Equipment to be procured under the EUWI+ and national needs - Representatives of subordinate organizations of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection • Q&A followed by discussion
16:30-17:00	CLOSING SESSION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding statements and decisions on future activities • Closure of the meeting

