

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT
WITH AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION**

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SUMMARY AND CONTEXT OF THE ACTION

Executive summary

The European Union's Water Initiative (EUWI) is a political initiative which seeks to assist partner countries in achieving water-related Millennium Development. The EUWI EECCA is the regional component of the EUWI focused on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). It supports work of the European Neighbourhood Policy and of the EU-Central Asia Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation. In addition, it helps to promote the progressive approximation to EU water policies, particularly to the EU Water Framework Directive, in EECCA countries.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is the strategic partner to support the policy dialogue process on integrated water resources management (IWRM). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is the strategic partner for water supply and sanitation (WSS).

National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on IWRM and WSS is the main operational instrument under the EUWI EECCA. The NPPDs are policy-oriented processes where key stakeholders meet and assess the feasibility of water-related policy objectives (including the Millennium Development Goals on water supply, sanitation, and resource management), the best strategies to achieve them, and the financial means attached to these strategies. The dialogues are conducted under the leadership of a high-level government representative such as the Deputy Minister of Water Resources or Chair of the State Water Committee. The NPDs are also based on the robust analytical input by experts.

In 2009 – 2010, the OECD and UNECE have implemented the NPDs on either water supply and sanitation or water resource management in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. The National Policy Dialogues on water resource management were initiated in 2010 Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan. Inception missions were organized to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In 2010, the Government of Kazakhstan submitted a request to the UNECE and the European Commission to start a National Policy Dialogue on water resource management.

Objectives of the action

The objective of the action is to provide active support to the implementation of the EUWI EECCA Working Group's programme of work and budget for 2009-2012, thereby supporting the achievement of the water-related Millennium Development Goals in the region, as well as the management of water resources.

The specific objectives of the action are to provide analytical inputs to the national policy dialogue processes that are already under way or that will be launched in the future and to support the facilitation of these policy dialogues.

Another specific objective is to support the organisation of annual meetings of the EUWI EECCA Working Group, which serves as a platform for dissemination and experience sharing.

The EUWI EECCA Working Group

The European Union's Water Initiative (EUWI) is a political initiative which seeks to assist partner countries in the development and implementation of policies, strategies and priorities for the water and sanitation sector which donors could align with and support. The Initiative ensures that existing resources are more effectively utilised and new resources are attracted in the sector to meet the specific requirements of individual developing countries and river basin organisations. The EUWI has five specific objectives: (i) the reinforcement of political commitment towards action and innovation oriented partnership; (ii) the promotion of improved water governance, capacity building and awareness; (iii) improved efficiency and effectiveness of water management through multi-stakeholder dialogue and coordination; (iv) strengthened co-operation through promoting river basin approaches in national and transboundary waters; and (v) identification of additional financial resources and mechanisms to ensure sustainable financing.

The EUWI EECCA Working Group is a group of senior EECCA countries' officials and their international partners. It identified UNECE as strategic partner to support National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on integrated water resources management, and the Task Force on the Environment Action Programme (EAP Task Force) as strategic partner on water supply and sanitation (WSS); the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) serves as a Secretariat for the EAP Task Force.

National Policy Dialogues

The main mechanism supported by the EUWI EECCA Working Group is National Policy Dialogues, on water resource management, on water supply and sanitation, and/or on financing water-related infrastructures.

National Policy Dialogues are designed to improve water-related policies. They are structured policy processes where key stakeholders meet and assess the feasibility of water-related policy objectives (including the water-related Millennium Development Goals), the best strategies to achieve them, and the financial means attached to these strategies.

The dialogues are fed with analytical work, robust policy analyses and illustrations from policies that work in other countries. They facilitate intra-government cooperation and donors' coordination.

The dialogues on WSS are high-level multi-stakeholder meetings, usually led by the ministry responsible for WSS and/or the Ministry of Economy. The dialogues on IWRM are usually led by the Ministry of Environment or the State Water Committee. All dialogues involve the ministries of foreign affairs, finance, regional development, environment, health, as well as associations of municipalities, water utilities and water users, representatives of the civil society, and their international partners: the European Commission (EC), UNECE, OECD/EAP Task Force, the country which chairs the EUWI EECCA WG, and international organizations (e.g. UNDP), international financial institutions (IFIs) and individual donor agencies.

National Policy Dialogues facilitate the development of policy packages. These activities pay particular attention to policy reforms towards sustainable water management and financing of water supply and sanitation, including conservation of the environment, water as a polluted natural resource, strengthening regulatory systems, and institutional frameworks. The final outputs of the National Policy Dialogues are policy documents addressing one or more of the above-mentioned issues.

National Policy dialogues result in legislative acts, ministerial orders, strategy documents, implementation plans, as well as recommendations and good practice documents. They can be related to funding mechanisms, including investment plans, infrastructure investment funds (Central Asia Initiative, Eastern Partnership), or medium term expenditure frameworks. National Policy Dialogues can help to prepare, develop and launch technical assistance projects with partners at the national level, to generate concrete results on the ground and advance with the achievement of the water-related MDGs. EUWI-EECCA partners have therefore started to discuss concrete cooperation with UNDP, bilateral donors and other organizations/countries on how to build on and utilize the outputs of the NPDs as a basis for development projects and initiatives in the future.

The Dialogues help adapt EU water policies to EECCA countries. Pilot projects illustrate what can be achieved, constraints to be overcome, and ways forward. The EUWI EECCA Working Group is the Forum where experience is shared and scaled-up.

Highlights of policy outcomes so far

The Interim Report shows that a considerable amount of work has materialised in the first two years of project implementation. Dialogues are active in ten countries, and, where appropriate, are substantiated by significant analytical work. A number of policy outputs have already been delivered and are being implemented.

Some of the major outputs are highlighted below:

- Policy Brief on results and lessons learned from the implementation of the NPD on IWRM in Armenia;

- One policy document on transboundary water cooperation between Georgia and Azerbaijan;
- One Governmental Order on wastewater discharges from municipal sources in Georgia;
- An annotated outline of a water and sanitation sector policy paper, approved by Coordination Council in Kyrgyzstan;
- Regulation on the establishment of a river basin council for the Chu river basin, in Kyrgyzstan;
- One Policy Brief and a draft roadmap on how to overcome WSS fragmentation in Ukraine;
- A concept note for the national strategy on water sector adaptation to climate change in Ukraine.

In addition, contacts have been taken at Head of State level in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

A number of projects now require further work to i) facilitate implementation, ii) clarify policy options, iii) articulate national strategies and initiatives at local/river basin level.

NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUES - PROGRESS MADE IN 2009-2010

National Policy Dialogues are actively underway in five countries, on either water supply or sanitation or water resource management. The countries are Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

In addition, National Policy Dialogues on water resource management were initiated in 2010 Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan. Inception missions were organized to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In 2010, the Government of Kazakhstan submitted a request to the UNECE and the European Commission to start a National Policy Dialogue on water resource management.

It follows that eleven out of the twelve EECCA countries are (or will soon be) covered by water-related National Policy Dialogues (Belarus has not shown interest in the process so far). The dialogues are demand driven and adjusted to the specific needs and priorities of the countries. They cover a variety of themes, which all contribute to the objectives of the EUWI.

The table below shows areas of work covered by on-going National Policy Dialogues in eleven EECCA countries. Detailed information is shared on a country basis on activities carried out in 2009 and 2010 and further steps.

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