

**Memorandum of Understanding
on the National Policy Dialogue in Georgia
between the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia
and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

1. Preamble

The National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), as well as on Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS), is the main mechanism for the implementation of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Under NPDs, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) leads the work on IWRM, while the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) leads the work on WSS.

The National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia started in 2009 with the official request of at the time Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia. In October 2011, the first Memorandum of Understanding was signed and several activities have been implemented thereafter.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter “MoU”) is to frame the activities of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (hereinafter “the Parties”) in implementation of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) in Georgia.

(a) Overall objective

The overall objective of the NPD in Georgia is to assist in implementing the programmes of work of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and its Protocol on Water and Health. Activities under the NPD would also help Georgia in achieving Sustainable Development Goals related to IWRM and WSS.

(b) Specific objectives and activities

The NPD in Georgia provides a platform for developing and implementing policy packages on IWRM and WSS, focused on achieving the following objectives:

- sustainable use of water resources taking into account the challenges of climate change;
- achieving safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation;
- protection of water ecosystems;
- prevention, surveillance and decrease of water borne diseases.

These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

- harmonization of the water legislation with relevant EU directives and with principles of IWRM;
- strengthening bilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries on the management of transboundary watercourses, such as the Kura;
- implementation of basin approach, support to basin administrations and basin councils;
- ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health, development and implementation of national targets under the Protocol;
- conducting training courses in the area of water resources management.

These specific objectives will be achieved through conducting different research activities and assessments and by the preparation of projects and proposals in the above-mentioned areas.

3. Methods of work

(a) Responsible organization in Georgia

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia is the responsible organization involved in the NPD process. For all institutions taking part in NPD activities, the Ministry will be the main contact organization in Georgia. UNECE will act as a strategic partner, providing methodological support and promoting the NPD process in Georgia.

(b) NPD Steering Committee

The NPD Steering Committee (hereinafter "SC") is an advisory and consultative body with regard to conducting NPD in Georgia.

The SC will monitor the overall progress of the NPD process and discuss its annual workplan and documents developed in the framework of NPD. Moreover, the SC will approve reports on the conducted work proposing general guidelines for operations for submission to the Government of Georgia.

The SC is being chaired by the Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia. The Ministry will implement secretarial duties of the SC.

Key actors, which will be invited by Chairman of the SC to participate in the National Policy Dialogue, include representatives of the:

- Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection;
- Ministry of Agriculture;
- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development;
- Ministry of Energy;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs;
- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure;
- National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health;
- United Water Supply Company;
- Georgian Water and Power Company;
- non-governmental organizations.

The following actors maybe also invited by the Chair of Steering Committee to participate in meetings of the SC:

- research organizations;
- water utilities operating in municipal and rural areas;
- municipalities / associations of municipalities.

Representatives of the European Union, UNECE, OECD, OSCE, UNDP and WHO will participate in the dialogue process. Meetings of the NPD Steering Committee are open to participation by representatives of EU member States and UNECE countries, as well as competent organizations and/or institutions, including International Financial Institutions and donor organizations active in the water sector. If need be, representatives of other countries as well as other competent organizations and institutions may be invited by the Chair to the SC meeting.

4. Financing of NPD work

The Parties participate in NPD on a voluntary basis and subject to the availability of adequate resources. The present MoU entails no financial obligations for one Party with regard to the financing of activities by the other Party in the framework of NPD, although such financing could take place on the basis of separate (bilateral or multilateral) agreement. Some of the NPD activities are expected to be financed by UNECE as part of the implementation of the project "European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+ 4 EaP)" under European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

5. Settlement of disputes

The Parties shall make their best efforts to settle, in good faith and through direct negotiations, any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of the present MoU or any breach thereof.

6. Privileges and immunities

The provisions set forth herein the present MoU or related to it will not influence any of the privileges or immunities of either of the Parties. The Parties will avoid all actions that may negatively affect the image and/or status of UNECE.

7. Duration

This MoU shall enter into force on the date of signature and will initially be valid for a period of four (4) years. Depending on the results and the willingness of the Parties to continue cooperation, the duration of the MoU may be extended.

8. Termination

If either of the Parties concludes that the MoU can no longer be effectively or correctly executed, it must consult the other Party. If it is found impossible to reach a consensus, either of the Parties can terminate the present MoU through a prior written notification one (1) month before the envisaged date of the MoU termination without any reimbursement claim.

9. Amendments

Any amendment to the present MoU and possible Annexes shall be made on the basis of a mutual written agreement by both Parties. Amendments constitute an integral part of the MoU. In the case of discrepancies or conflicts between the present MoU and its Amendments, the MoU has prevalence.

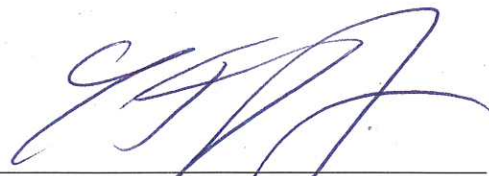
Signed in Budapest, Hungary «17» November 2015

For the Ministry of Environment and Natural
Resources Protection of Georgia

For the United Nations Economic Commission
for Europe



Ekaterine Grigalava
Deputy Minister



Christian Friis Bach
Executive Secretary