



Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan Republic

National Policy Dialogue in Integrated Water Resources Management in Azerbaijan Republic

- Memorandum of Understanding -

Background

With the letter sent by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 15 January 2010 to Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Secretary of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourse and International Lakes has submitted an official request for a National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on integrated water resources management (IWRM).

National Policy Dialogues are carried out within the EECCA Component of the EU Water Initiative and are the main operational instrument within this Initiative. As concerns integrated water resources management, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) acts as a strategic partner of EECCA countries.

Activities under the National Policy Dialogue in ^{Azerbaijan} <country> for the period starting April 2010 are formally based on:

- The decision of the 10th meeting of the Working Group for the EECCA component of the European Union's Water Initiative (Moscow, 13 December 2007);
- The Contribution Agreement of the European Commission, which provides funding for UNECE to carry out the "National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management in EECCA countries under the EU Water Initiative" (No. 21.0401/2007/485348/SUB/D2).

Memorandum of Understanding

Partners

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) are Partners to the present Memorandum of Understanding.

Overall objective

The overall objective of the National Policy Dialogue in the Azerbaijan Republic is to help reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to water, most prominently targets 9 and 10 of Goal 7 to:

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources (MDG 7 -Target 9); and
- Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation (MDG 7 - Target 10).

Country-specific activities will be initiated regarding integrated water resources management (IWRM) to improve regulatory and administrative frameworks, help setting country priorities, identify projects and develop capacity in the EECCA region through a dialogue that, among others, involves public authorities and representatives of the civil society.

Specific objectives

The National Policy Dialogue in the Azerbaijan Republic is a platform for drawing up and implementing policy packages on integrated water resources management (IWRM), including the challenges:

- Sustainable use of the water management to the climate change,
- Achieving safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation;
- Protection of water ecosystems;
- Prevention, surveillance and decrease of water borne diseases.

The specific objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

- Elaboration of the governmental strategy of the Azerbaijan Republic on management of water resources (further “the Water Strategy”) based on the principles of the IWRM;
- Development of an action plan to implement the proposed Water Strategy;
- Establishment of an institutional structure for the implementation of the Water Strategy;
- Harmonization of the water legislation;
- Preparation and implementation of specific thematic projects, including the projects on biomonitoring;
- Development and implementation of a pilot project aimed at introduction of a river basin principle of management in the river basin of Ganyh (Alazan).

To reach to overall and specific objectives, the NPD will be coordinated with other ongoing projects in the water sector in the Azerbaijan Republic, including foreign financed projects, such as

- The state program aimed at improvement of the environmental situation in the Azerbaijan Republic for the period of 2010 – 2014;
- The UNDP Programme on addressing flooding on the Southern slope of the Caucasus;
- Programmes of the European Union and of other international organisations.

Full account will be taken of past and ongoing work of UNECE on integrated water resources management in the EECCA region as well as of joint UNECE activities on water issues.

Strategic Partners

UNECE is the strategic partner on issues related to integrated water resources management. UNECE will draw up draft work plans (Roadmaps) for the NPD process, provide methodological support and facilitate the NPD process in the Azerbaijan Republic as set out in the applicable contributions agreement between the European Commission and UNECE.

Key national institutions in the Azerbaijan Republic

The key national institutions in the Azerbaijan Republic involved in the NPD is the Ministry of the Ecology and Natural Resources.

Steering Group

A Steering Group with multi-stakeholder representation will be established to oversee the implementation of the NPD in the Azerbaijan Republic.

The Steering Group is being chaired by a representative who will be appointed by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Azerbaijan Republic.

The Steering Group will agree on the work programme (i.e. the so-called the Roadmap), draw up and approve policy packages and discuss other relevant documents prepared within the framework of the NPD. The Steering Group will also approve reports for submission to the EUWI EECCA Working Group on progress made, and provide overall guidance to the work.

Key actors

Key actors, which will be invited by the Chairpersons of the Steering Group to participate in the National Policy Dialogue, include representatives of the:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Ministry of Public Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Ministry of Industry and Energy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- The Joint Stock Company Amelioration and Water Economy
- The Joint Stock Company Azersu
- Non-governmental organizations.

The following actors may be also invited by the Chairpersons of the Steering Group to participate in meetings of the Steering Group:

- Research organisations;
- Water utilities operating in municipal and rural areas;
- Municipalities/associations of municipalities.

Representatives of the European Commission, UNECE, OECD, OSCE and UNDP will also participate in the dialogue process. Steering Group meetings 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. If need be, representatives of other countries as well as other competent organizations and institutions may be invited by the Chairpersons to Steering Group meetings.

Consultative council

A consultative council will be established that will include experts representing research organisations, NGOs and businesses.

Secretarial duties of the Steering Group

The secretarial duties of the Steering Group will be implemented by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources.

UNECE will provide assistance, as appropriate.

Reporting

The Partners acknowledge the importance of reporting on the progress of the NPD in the Republic of Azerbaijan to the meetings of the EUWI EECCA Working Group and other relevant meetings, including those under the UNECE Water Convention and the EAP Task Force.

Financing NPD activities

The Partners participate in the NPD on a voluntary basis, and subject to the availability of adequate resources. The present Memorandum of Understanding does not entail any obligations on the Partners with regard to financing other Partners' activities in the framework of the NPD, though such financing could take place by agreement (bilateral or multi-lateral).

Based on the provisions of the contribution agreement between the European Commission and UNECE, the dialogue process on integrated water resources management will be financed within the frame of available resources.

Calendar of implementation of the NPD IWRM

Please see in Annex 1.



Francesca Bernardini
UNECE Convention on the protection and
Use of transboundary watercourses and
international lakes

27/9/2010



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