



The Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia and
the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

National Policy Dialogue in Georgia on Integrated Water Resources Management

**Memorandum of Understanding between the
Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia
and
the United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe**

Background

The National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management is conducted under the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia component of the European Union (EU) Water Initiative and is the main operational tool in this initiative. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) was nominated by the European Commission as a strategic partner to the EU under the EU Water Initiative in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to implement integrated water resources management (IWRM) principles. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was nominated as a strategic partner to the EU for water supply and sanitation.

By the letter of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia, dated 28 October 2009, to the Secretary to the Meeting of the Parties to the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), Georgia has submitted an official request for a National Policy Dialogue on IWRM.

Activities under the National Policy Dialogue in Georgia are formally based on:

- The decision of the tenth meeting of the EU Water Initiative’s EECCA¹ Working Group (Moscow, 13 December 2007);
- The Contribution Agreement of the European Commission, which provides funding for ECE to carry out the National Policy Dialogues on IWRM in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia under the EU Water Initiative (No. 21.0401/2007/485348/SUB/D2);
- The Contribution Agreement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, which provides funding for ECE to carry out the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia in 2010–2012.

Common Understanding

Overall objective

The overall objective of the National Policy Dialogue in Georgia is to help the country reach its 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 IWRM to improve regulatory and administrative frameworks, to help setting country priorities, to identify projects and to develop capacity through a dialogue that, among others, involves public authorities and representatives of civil society.

¹ Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Specific objectives

The National Policy Dialogue in Georgia is a platform for drawing up and implementing policy packages on IWRM focused on the following key issues:

- Institutional reforms in implementation of EU Water Framework Directive principles, including preparation of a National Water Law;
- Setting up the targets under the ECE Protocol on Water and Health;
- Strengthening transboundary water cooperation with Azerbaijan and supporting Georgian efforts towards preparing for accession to the ECE Water Convention.

These specific objectives will be achieved through policy packages. Such policy packages are draft pieces of legislation (e.g., governmental or ministerial regulations); recommendations and good practice documents; analyses of institutional/management structures; and water management plans and water safety plans and assessments of the effectiveness of measures undertaken to prevent, control and reduce adverse effects on the environment and human health and safety.

Full account will be taken of the past and ongoing work of ECE on IWRM in the Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian region, as well as of joint ECE activities on water issues.

Strategic partners

ECE is the strategic partner to the EU under the EU Water Initiative on issues related to IWRM. ECE will draw up draft workplans (Roadmaps) for the National Policy Dialogue process, provide methodological support and facilitate the National Policy Dialogue process in Georgia as set out in the applicable contribution agreement between the European Commission and ECE.

Responsible organization in Georgia

The Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia is the organization responsible for the process of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia.

Steering Committee

To oversee the implementation of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia, a Steering Committee comprising representatives of concerned organizations will be established.

The Steering Committee Chair will be the Deputy Minister of Environment Protection of Georgia.

The Steering Committee will:

- Coordinate the preparation of the Roadmap for the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM.
- Provide overall guidance to the activities carried out under the National Policy Dialogue.
- Elaborate and suggest activities and policy measures for IWRM and guide their implementation.
- Discuss and provide guidance on other relevant documents produced in the Dialogue.
- Consider progress reports for submission to the EU Water Initiative's EECCA Working Group.

The Steering Committee will meet when deemed necessary, and at a minimum once a year.

Key actors

Key actors invited by the Chair of the Steering Committee to participate in the National Policy Dialogue include representatives of the:

1. Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia
2. Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
3. Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
4. Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Georgia
5. Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia
6. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
7. Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia
8. Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
9. Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee of the Georgian Parliament
10. Health-Care and Social Issues Committee of the Georgian Parliament

and,

1. “The United Water Supply Company of Georgia” LLC
2. “Georgian Water & Power” LLC
3. The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) project — Aarhus Centre in Georgia
4. The n“National Water Partnership of Georgia”
5. The non-governmental organization “The Greens Movement of Georgia/ Friends of the Earth — Georgia”

Representatives of ECE, the EU, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will also participate in the dialogue process. Steering Committee meetings are open to participation by representatives of EU member States and ECE countries, as well as competent organizations and/or institutions, including international financial institutions and donor organizations. If necessary, representatives of other countries as well as other competent organizations and institutions may be invited by the Chair to Steering Group meetings.

The secretariat of the Steering Committee

Duties of the secretariat of the Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia will be performed by the National Water Partnership of Georgia.

Reporting

The ECE and Government of Georgia recognize the importance of reporting on the progress of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia for the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia component of the EU Water Initiative and other relevant meetings, including

meetings of the UNECE Water Convention and the EU Water Initiative's EECCA Working Group.

Funding of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia

The ECE and Government of Georgia will participate in the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia on a voluntary basis, depending on the availability of adequate resources. This Memorandum does not entail any obligations on one Partner to fund the activities of the other, although such funding can be made available by mutual agreement.

Subject to availability of approved funds, ECE may provide financial support to the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM process.

Amendments

Any amendment to the present Memorandum shall be made by mutual agreement by the Partners in the form of an exchange of letters. All amendments shall enter into force after approval by the Partners of the amendment to this Memorandum.

Settlement of disputes

The Partners shall make their best efforts to promptly settle, in good faith through direct negotiations, any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of or in connection with the present Memorandum or any breach thereof.

Duration

This Memorandum shall enter into force on the date of signature by the Partners and will initially be valid for a period of two (2) years, unless one Partner notifies the other Partner in writing of its wish to terminate the Memorandum giving at least three (3) months' notice. Depending on the results and the willingness of the Partners to continue cooperation, the Memorandum can be prolonged on an annual basis.

The Memorandum is signed in the English language.

For the United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe

For the Ministry of Environment
Protection of Georgia

Ján Kubiš
Executive Secretary

Giorgi Khachidze
Minister

Date: _____

Date: _____