

Astana Water Action – progress achieved

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Astana Water Action (2012-2015)

- Endorsed at the seventh EfE conference (Astana, September 2011), and part of program of work of the Water Convention for 2013-2015
- Initiative based on doc. ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/5, prepared by the Chair of the Bureau of the UNECE Water Convention
- Collection of possible actions for improving the status of water and water-related ecosystems through their more sustainable management:
 - General actions
 - Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems
 - Sustainable management of water and greening the economy



Astana Water Action -

- 78 actions from 21 countries and 4 organisations



Mid-term review of the Astana Conference outcomes

- Request from the CEP 18 (Geneva, April 2012), template developed by secretariat
 - Progress
 - Challenges and lessons learned
 - Usefulness of Astana Water Action
 - Future of Astana Water Action
- Responses by 14 countries and 4 organisations (80%)
- Late responses from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Portugal
- Report by secretariat on AWA implementation:
Of 62 actions reported: 47 in progress, 15 completed



Progress achieved - Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems

- Developed river basin management plans (e.g. Serbia)
- Implemented/designed institutional reforms (e.g. Georgia)
- Steps to harmonize legislation with the EU directives (e.g. Croatia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia)
- Actions on monitoring, information management, assessment, research (e.g. Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Switzerland)
- Actions on protecting water-related ecosystems (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Republic of Moldova, Switzerland)
- Actions on human health issues (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania, EAP TF, ECE)



Progress achieved - Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems

- Actions to improve water quality (Hungary, Romania, Switzerland) for better human health
- Actions in adapting to extreme events and climate change (Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Republic of Moldova, Switzerland, USA)
- Actions to support transboundary cooperation (Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, USA, ECE, Eco-Tiras, INBO)

Progress achieved - Sustainable management of water and greening the economy



Challenges

- Human resources (insufficient personnel, capacity)
- Availability of reliable data, problems with data exchange
- Limited financial resources
- Lengthy approval procedures for project type actions
- Coordination between sectoral authorities
- Need to improve communication and involve population
- Governance issues
- Challenges with regard to emerging issues
- Challenges with regard to transboundary cooperation



Usefulness of Astana Water Action

- Useful to strengthen political support to sustainable water management (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Serbia, Eco-Tiras, INBO). Not really “strengthened” political support to water since such support was available, but important symbolic action (Germany, Switzerland, Czech Republic)
- Important for:
 - Fostering exchange of experiences (Italy, Romania, Switzerland) in both national and transboundary water management and supporting IWRM
 - Bringing together various sectoral ministries & stakeholders
 - Helped comply with international obligations (Conventions, EU legislation)



Future

- Interest to continue to submit and monitor new actions (Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland, US, ECE, Eco-Tiras); no interest in new commitments (Croatia, Germany, Czech Republic). Austria – only ready to report of same intensiveness. Italy – reserved position to new commitments
- Proposals to raise awareness about the initiative (Hungary)
- No duplication with existing reporting-type actions (Hungary)
- Important joint platform of EfE process and Water Convention (Switzerland)



Discussion at CEP (22-25 October 2013)

- Panel discussion on 22 October (4 countries, 1 organisation)
- Questions for discussion:
 - (a) What is the added value of the Astana Water Action? Has the Astana Water Action contributed to sustainable water management and transboundary water cooperation?
 - (b) What are the positive and negative lessons of the Astana Water Action?
 - (c) What are the main challenges in implementing the Astana Water Action? How can they be overcome?
 - (d) How could the impact of the Astana Water Action be increased and the experience-sharing between stakeholders intensified? Does the Astana Water Action have enough visibility?
 - (e) How could the progress and results of the Astana Water Action be reported to the next “Environment for Europe” conference? Should the Astana Water Action framework be extended? If so, how?

