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MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON  
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WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment

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**STRATEGY AND WORKPLAN FOR 2010-2012 OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
WATER ASSESSMENT CENTRE**

Submitted by the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute

This document was prepared by the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute in consultation with the Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties, the Chairperson of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, the Netherlands and the secretariat. The document includes the proposed: Strategy for the International Water Assessment Center (IWAC) and IWAC's workplan for 2010-2012.

The document is intended to replace the current Terms of Reference of IWAC. The Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment is invited to discuss and agree on the document in view of its submission for possible adoption at the fifth session of the Convention's Meeting of the Parties (10-12 November 2009).

**I. STRATEGY FOR THE  
INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT CENTRE**

**Background**

1. The International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) was established as a collaborative centre of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) at the second meeting of the Parties (March, 2000) under the leadership of the Netherlands. Since then IWAC proved to be

an effective operational arm of the Convention and its Protocols, which helped to transform these instruments' obligations into concrete action on the ground.

2. The Government of Slovakia offered at the fourth meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (November 2006) to host IWAC at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute. Following this offer, IWAC was formally inaugurated on 7 April 2009 and the Memorandum of Understanding on IWAC between the Slovak Government and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on IWAC has been signed on the same date.

## **1. Objective**

3. The core objective of this Strategy is to provide a general framework for IWAC's functioning. The Strategy is intended to assist Parties and non-Parties to the Convention and other potential IWAC partners in developing a long-term planning to pursue practical implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. On the basis of this Strategy, Parties, non-Parties and IWAC partners are invited to: (a) define and implement needs-driven activities; (b) seek synergies among different projects; and (c) explore possibility to raise funds for the activities.

## **2. Responsibility**

4. The growing need to consider monitoring and assessment within the wider context of integrated water resources management (IWRM) calls for broadening IWAC original focus on monitoring and assessment.

5. On the basis of the decisions by the Meeting of the Parties on the areas of work under the Convention and the experience gained since IWAC establishment, IWAC responsibilities will include:

- (a) Initiate and/or assist in developing and implementing pilot projects on priority issues defined by the Parties to the Convention;
- (b) Assist in preparation of periodic assessments of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters;
- (c) Organize training courses and workshops, and/or render assistance to UNECE countries and joint bodies in conducting such events;
- (d) Provide advisory service at the requests of countries in the context of IWRM in the UNECE region, and in other regions as appropriate;
- (e) Act as a clearing house on issues dealt under the Convention and its Protocols, including collection and dissemination of relevant material;
- (f) To act as a coordinator among its Core Group members and other partners in order to promote: (i) joint action, including implementation of projects and related fund raising activities; (ii) exchange of concepts and findings of scientific research, dialogue between scientists and policy makers, for the transformation of scientific results and technical know-how into policies;

(g) To assist joint bodies within the terms of article 9, paragraph 2, of the Convention in carrying out their obligations under the Convention;

6. IWAC shall ensure that all its tasks and main activities are properly coordinated and harmonized, to the extent feasible, with pertinent legislation and policies of the European Union, activities of the European Environment Agency and its relevant topic centres, and the activities of joint bodies under the Convention.

7. Activities should be needs driven and can be organized at the UNECE region-wide level, at the subregional level (South-East Europe, East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, EU and other Western European countries) or at the national level.

8. Specific workplans for the inter-sessional period of three years between meetings of the Parties will be developed to pursue implementation of priority activities and submitted for adoption to the Meeting of the Parties.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

9. The Meeting of Parties to the Water Convention will consider progress in IWAC activities and decide on strategic directions for its further work.

10. Subsidiary bodies under the Water Convention will define specific areas of work, including through identification of activities such as pilot projects.

11. The secretariat of the UNECE Water Convention will ensure communication between the Convention's bodies and IWAC secretariat and will assist in implementing activities, as appropriate.

12. The Core Group of IWAC, comprised of representatives of leading institutions dealing with the water-related issues, will: (a) prepare, review and update, in consultation with IWAC secretariat and the UNECE secretariat, future strategies and workplans for IWAC activities for consideration by the Meetings of the Parties to the Water Convention and other subsidiary bodies, as appropriate; and (b) decide on and support implementation of activities, including fundraising, as relevant. The composition of IWAC Core Group will need to be reconsidered taking into account IWAC workplan. Interested institutions are invited to contact the IWAC secretariat.

13. IWAC secretariat will take the lead in initiating and implementing the activities defined in the IWAC workplan.

### **4. Resources**

14. IWAC secretariat will be located at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute in Bratislava until November 2012. IWAC will use the Institute's resources, as needed for its activities. Slovakia will provide the necessary financial and human resources as well as technical means to ensure smooth and effective functioning of IWAC.

15. The following sources of financial support to IWAC activities are foreseen: (a) the budget of the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute; and (b) the budget of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs (priority subregions are Caucasus, Central Asia and Balkans). IWAC will also consider raising funds from the European Commission and other donors, as needed.

## **II. WORKPLAN FOR 2010-2012 OF THE INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT CENTRE**

16. The proposed workplan includes activities in which IWAC will play a role or lead them. The list includes activities already covered by the programme of work for 2007-2009 adopted by the fourth meeting of the Parties (November, 2006), as well as additional proposals.

17. The implementation of the workplan will depend on the commitment of partner countries and institutions and on availability of resources for the foreseen activities.

### **1. Activities**

#### **1.1 Projects**

##### **(a) New Pilot projects on Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters**

18. New pilot projects in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and in South Eastern Europe will be defined, including through the preparatory process of the second Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters. The need to consider monitoring and assessment in the broader context of IWRM also calls for widening the original focus on pilot programme on monitoring and assessment. Furthermore, the scope of pilot projects should, as much as possible, become basin-wide, rather than be limited to a single component of the basin, such as river, lake or groundwater. Scope and objectives of new pilot projects should build on different activities under the Convention.

19. In particular the programme will have three main focus areas:

(a) Adaptation to climate change in the transboundary context, including management of floods and droughts;

(b) Joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, including data management and information exchange; and

(c) Implementation of payments for ecosystem services to support integrated water resources management.

20. More information on the objectives, focus and other issues related to pilot projects is contained in the information document No.1 for the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

21. IWAC, in cooperation with the interested partners, will assist in developing, fund-raising and implementing the projects.

22. In previous meetings, the following basins were proposed for possible pilot projects: Sava, Dniester, Chu and Talas, Amur, as well as in Caucasus and lakes shared by Belarus, Latvia and the Russian Federation.

23. Interested countries should inform of their intention to develop and implement pilot projects.

**(b) Ongoing projects carried out by other organizations**

24. In order to develop synergy and cross-fertilization of different projects for supporting implementation of the Convention, IWAC will also facilitate inter-linkage among the most relevant initiatives on transboundary waters in the UNECE region, including:

- Danube – Balkan UNDP/GEF Tisza project<sup>1</sup>
- Vojvodina SlovakAid project<sup>2</sup>
- International Sava River Basin Commission – several projects<sup>3</sup>
- Belarus – Ukraine - Slovakia NATO project on the Pripjat River Basin<sup>4</sup>
- Kura River Basin project financed by EuroAid – Caucasus countries<sup>5</sup>
- Several activities organized by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (BSC)<sup>6</sup>
- Others *to be defined*.

**1.2. Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters**

25. IWAC, in close cooperation with Global Water Partnership for Central and Eastern Europe (GWP-CEE), and other partners will contribute to the preparation of the Assessment through supporting completion of the datasheets and coordinating inputs related to the waters shared by EU countries; facilitating communication with experts, supporting preparation of substantive contributions, and organizing or support the organization of meetings, in particular a subregional meeting for non-EU countries in Eastern Europe and neighbouring EU countries and a sub-regional meeting for EU and other Western European countries.

**1.3. Sharing of experience and capacity building.**

**(a) Trainings**

26. IWAC will facilitate organization of the thematic trainings responding countries needs. The trainings should promote implementation of the set of guidelines developed under the auspices of the Water Convention. Preparation of several trainings for Caucasus countries has already started. The trainings are in: (a), water assessment, and (b) flood warning and forecasting c information systems and GIS. These trainings will be organized in the frame of the Kura River Basin project and IWAC support both in Slovakia and in Caucasus countries.

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP/GEF Tisza MSP Integrating multiple benefits of wetlands and floodplains into improved transboundary management for Tisza River Basin [http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-pages/tisza\\_undp\\_gef.htm](http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-pages/tisza_undp_gef.htm)

<sup>2</sup> SlovakAid project Strengthening the Capacity for Implementation of the Directive 76/464/EEC in Vojvodina Region <http://www.savacommission.org/>

<sup>3</sup> NATO Project Strengthening of the Flood Monitoring & Forecasting in the Pripjat River Basin

<sup>5</sup> EuropeAid Trans Boundary River Management Phase II Kura River

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.icpdr.org/> and <http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-pages/dablas.htm>

IWAC will also support “public participation” element of several other projects aimed to train professionals and relevant stakeholders.

**(b) Monitoring Tailor-Made V**

27. As a follow up to the previous conferences, it is proposed to organize the fifth conference Monitoring Tailor-Made in 2010 or 2011, as a continuation of the previous work of IWAC. The basic preparatory activities (e.g. defining interest of target groups and selecting topics) should already start in 2009.

**(c) Internet site**

28. A more active maintenance of the IWAC Internet site is anticipated. Exchange of knowledge, and sharing the information and opinions via a “discussion forum” is suggested.

29. To improve the dissemination of information about the Water Convention also using progress in implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), through the IWAC Internet site, references and documents will be included.

30. Based on the experience gained in the first round of preparation of River Basin Management Plans in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (EU WFD) in EU members countries in 2009, IWAC will support:

- exchange of information between member countries, including on several “difficult” themes as economy, inter-calibration, water assessment, exemptions, priority substances
- exchange of experience in the implementation of the EU Flood Directive and in drought management
- addressing gaps related to climate change in river management planning
- dissemination of experience in implementation of the EU WFD to countries with economies in transition, in particular countries sharing the Danube River Basin and countries in South-Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

**(d) Newsletter**

31. It is proposed to produce a digital newsletter on a regular basis.

**2. Resources**

32. Being a formal unit of the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, IWAC is functioning under the supervision of the Director General of the Institute. The Institute has about 500 employees and its portfolio covers nearly all thematic fields of IWAC work. IWAC will use the Institute’s resources, as needed for its activities.

33. The following sources of financial support to IWAC activities are foreseen: (a) the budget of the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute; and (b) the budget of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs (priority subregions are Caucasus, Central Asia and Balkans). IWAC will also consider raising funds from the European Commission and other donors, as needed.

34. Financial resources are allocated by the Slovak Government yearly (starting from 2008) to cover personnel cost, office cost and co-finance the IWAC activities.

(a) Personnel

Permanent secretariat (part time job-80%)

Director: Mr. Boris Minarik

Deputy Director: Ms. Andrea Majovska

Communication and administration: Ms. Marta Palkova, Ms. Anna Klinovska

Financial manager: Ms. Gabriela Mokranova

Permanent experts (part time job, as required by activities)

Integrated management: Mr. Jan Kucharcik

Cooperation with other international organizations: Ms. Maria Mirtova

Hydrology: Ms. Jana Poorova

Surface waters monitoring and assessment: Ms. Lea Mrafkova

Ground waters monitoring and assessment: Mr. Eugen Kullman

Operational hydrology and flood protection: Ms. Danica Leskova

Information systems and GIS: Mr. Ivan Frano

Databases: Ms. Daniela Durkovicova

Additional experts

Ad hoc thematic working groups, which will also include experts in other fields, as needed, will be established, as required by activities.

(b) IT resources

35. The Institute's IT system included several Internet servers and about 500 PCs, which are connected in Local Area Network (LAN). The system ensures processing and on-line screening of data on monitoring and assessment of the waters and air of Slovakia. Information is received from national hydrological and meteorological stations, satellite, radar, lightening and other observation networks. Cooperation with other countries and international organizations is also taking place.

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