



**WGMA/2003/1**

Fourth meeting

St. Michielsgestel, The Netherlands, 12-13 September 2003

**Progress Report on the Rivers Pilots  
October 2002 to September 2003**

**1. Introduction**

The programme of pilot projects on the monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers is part of the work programme for 2000-2003 under the Water Convention. There are five such projects being undertaken directly by the Core Group for Pilot Projects (the Bug, Morava, Mures/Maros, Ipel/Ipoly and Latorica-Uzh), and four additional projects (Kura, Severski Donets, Pripjat and Tobol), which are being separately organised and funded through the EU TACIS programme. There are three main objectives of the UN ECE pilot projects:

- to *demonstrate* the implementation of the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers
- to *support* countries in their implementation
- to *learn* from the implementation of the guidelines to assist in their review and improvement.

Previous meetings of the WGMA have considered and evaluated the work in the pilot projects and made observations, recommendations and decisions about the programme. The views and recommendations of the last meeting of the WGMA with respect to the pilot projects are summarised in section 2 below. Section 3 provides information about the progress during the past year, and section 4 gives an indication of the work required to complete the pilot projects.

**2. Recommendations of the third meeting of the WGMA (Helsinki, 2002)**

In response to the report on progress to its third meeting, the WGMA urged IWAC and UN ECE to publicise the availability of the completed reports and to facilitate their distribution. This has been done. The WGMA regretted the absence of Ukraine from the Helsinki workshop and asked the secretariat to help encourage their participation. In spite of the efforts of all concerned, this has not been possible. The WGMA endorsed the idea of the evaluation workshop, and urged UN ECE, IWAC and the Core Group to organise such a workshop, which was held in May 2003 (see below), and to present the main findings at the Monitoring Tailormade IV conference. The WGMA expressed the hope that the recommendations coming from the pilot projects would be implemented, and the delegations from Poland and Slovakia informed the meeting that this was already happening.

### **3. Pilot project activities**

#### ***3.1 Summary of previous project activities***

Inception reports (Report No 1) for each of the five pilot projects selected by the Core Group for implementation of the guidelines were produced and published as outputs from the Task Force on Monitoring and Assessment under the Convention. Separate working reports were completed, either at a country or river basin level for several components of the assessment process. These included an inventory of human activities in the basin, compilation and evaluation of existing legislation, information needs, surveys of water quality and strategies for monitoring and assessment. The essential next step was to put these together into a consistent series of reports for each basin, a so-called Synthesis report (Report No 2) and Recommendations (Report No 3).

Workshops for the authors from participating countries, together with advisers from the lead country, were held on information needs in December 2000 and synthesis in June 2001. At the latter, it was agreed by the participants that results of the five pilot projects would be presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference in April 2002 in Poland. It was an ambitious task to meet the deadline, given the delays that had been experienced in project implementation up to that time, and implied that the reports would need to be finished by the end of 2001. In the event, three of the No 2 Reports, for the Bug, Morava and Mures/Maros were completed in time for the conference. Work has continued on the recommendations reports, as described below. To facilitate this, a workshop was held in Helsinki in October 2002, immediately before the third meeting of the WGMA, and the outcome of that workshop was reported to the WGMA.

#### ***3.2 Activities since the last meeting of the WGMA***

##### **Recommendations reports**

Work on the recommendations reports has proceeded following the improved approaches agreed at the Helsinki workshop, but much slower than anticipated. The final drafts for the Morava, Bug and Mures/Maros have been completed. The first two have been edited and had English corrections and the Mures/Maros is in progress, and they will then be ready for final layout and printing. Draft of the reports on Water Management Issues for the Ipel'/Ipoly and Latorica-Uzh were completed before the Helsinki workshop, at which it was agreed that the two intended reports on i) water management issues and ii) recommendations would be combined for these pilot projects. A draft of the Ipel'/Ipoly report has been prepared, but unfortunately for the Latorica-Uzh the participation of Ukraine has been inadequate for the report to be completed.

##### **Evaluation workshop**

The other major activity since the last meeting of the WGMA has been the holding of an evaluation workshop for the pilot projects, as suggested by the participants at the Helsinki workshop. This was held over two days in May at Biddinghuizen in the Netherlands, together with a meeting of the IWAC Core Group. Nine members of the pilot project teams, the advisers from RIZA and several of the IWAC Core Group members discussed the experience gained and lessons learned from the pilot projects, and also learned from the experience of the TACIS Joint River Management project team from the four "eastern" pilots. The objectives of the workshop were to present and discuss:

1. the recommendations on monitoring and assessment for each basin

2. lessons learnt from carrying out the pilot projects and recommendations for future projects
3. recommendations from this experience for review of the guidelines

The draft recommendations reports formed the basis for the first of these objectives, for the second and third the experience of the pilot project teams, including the eastern pilots, would be the primary source, and for the third the responses to the questionnaire on implementation of the guidelines would provide supplementary information.

The outcome of the discussions related to the second objective have been summarized in a separate report prepared primarily for the benefit of the Meeting of the Parties in November 2003 and separately presented to the WGMA, and the specific recommendations for review of the guidelines are also summarized elsewhere and separately presented.

#### **4. Future activities**

##### ***4.1 Report completion***

Final editing of English and layout for report no 3 for the Morava, Bug and Mures/Maros will be undertaken in preparation for printing. The printing quality level will naturally depend on the available funding, but at least colour covers consistent in style with reports 1 and 2 and colour for the basin maps will be required. Adequate status and quality for these reports will help the project partners to obtain the right level of institutional support and funding for implementation of the recommendations. The draft report for the Ipel'/Ipoly currently rests with the Project Leader for detailed editing but is largely complete. While the Latorica/Uzh reporting cannot be completed without the required contributions from Ukraine, nevertheless the valuable information that has been assembled and discussed and the hard work that has gone into the project from the Slovak side should not be lost, and the report should be finalized as an interim document.

##### ***4.2 Evaluation of lessons learned***

The outcome of the evaluation workshop will be presented to the Meeting of the Parties in November 2003 and a presentation will be made at Monitoring Tailormade IV.

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