

5th joint meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment under the Water Convention, 6-8 May 2024

Agenda item 8e

National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management

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on behalf of partners:

UNECE, OECD, OiEau , Environment Agency Austria, ADA

Overview – National Policy Dialogues

National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Supply and Sanitation (NPDs) consist of:

- 1. High-level **intersectoral Steering Committee meetings**, which is a multistakeholder platform for annual discussions on key aspects of the water policy reforms*
- 2. **Policy packages**, e.g. support to development of national Water strategies / laws / codes, secondary legislation, studies, pilot projects, investment concepts*

- NPDs currently ongoing in **10 countries**: 5 countries of **Eastern Europe and Caucasus** and 5 in **Central Asia (EECCA)**
- **Diverse stakeholders**: all relevant authorities, academia, donor agencies, IFIs, local and basin authorities, NGOs, etc.
- NPDs are **facilitated** jointly by UNECE and OECD
- **Funded and supported by**: European Union, Finland, Switzerland, Romania, Norway, Germany and by partners (WB, SDC, OSCE, CAREC, IFAS bodies, UNDP, UNESCO,...)

Achievements: improved intersectoral cooperation

- ✓ In 5 countries of Eastern Europe and Caucasus - improved intersectoral cooperation (wide participation of stakeholders and donors) and several commitments on implementation of:
 1. Recently adopted high-level national water policies (laws, strategies, codes)
 2. EU water-related directives (e.g. success of the Water Framework Directive gravely depends on implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and Nitrate Directive)
 3. RBMP (1st and 2nd generation)
 3. TB cooperation and results of the reporting under SDG 6.5.2
 4. Water & health agenda
 5. Water & agriculture nexus

How was it achieved? – By organization of a series of the intersectoral NPD Steering Committee meetings, with strong political ownership, e.g. chaired at the deputy minister level

Plan for 2024:

- NPDs in UKR and AZ and Central Asia
- A study on human capital in the water sector in EAP and recommendations on its improvement

Results of the EU4Water&Data Programme in Eastern Partner Countries discussed at the NPDs

RBMPs (OiEau)

12 RBMPs developed in AM, GE, UA according to EU WFD
Support to the Strategic Environment Impact Assessment for 9 basins of Ukraine and public consultations
National workshops on financing RBMPs and Programmes of Measures
Agreement on the secondary legislation to be developed and adopted to implement RBMPs and other water-related directives

Economic viability of strategies and mobilizing finance for strengthening water management (OECD)

Work on economic instruments and harmful subsidies
Development of roadmaps to improve economics of water management
Financing Nature based Solutions
Roundtable on water financing – 30-31 May, Brussels
Work in 5 Central Asia countries in frame of the water, energy, food and ecosystems nexus

Water Monitoring (UBA)

Surface Water: new surveys being implemented in AM, AZ, GE, MD; trainings on Phytobentos and data interpretation
Groundwater: new surveys being done in AM, GE und MD; ongoing trainings on GWB delineation and status assessment
Coastal and Transitional waters: new surveys done in GE (Black Sea) and AZ (Caspian Sea and Kura delta)
New transboundary surveys in autumn 2023 on Debed river (AM-GE) and in spring 2024 on Alazani river (GE-AZ)
Laboratory: various capacity constraints in all reference labs

- Supported participation (except UA) at series of Proficiency Testings (nutrients, heavy metals)
- Support for finishing application to accreditation (ISO 17025) in AM, AZ, UA labs
- Series of regional lab trainings for all countries for WFD-compliant priority parameters using GC-MS/MS (2022-2024)

Wastewater-based epidemiology: Sars-Cov2 monitoring introduced in 2022 (first successful sampling in each country, several trainings, guidance docs: 3 July 2023 high-level online workshop with COM on how to nationally institutionalize WBE surveillance

Achievements: improved TB cooperation

- ✓ **Signing the trilateral memorandum of cooperation** in October 2023 on the Prut River by the ministers of environment of MD, RO and UA
- ✓ **Improved understanding** on how the results of the 3rd reporting under SDG indicator 6.5.2 (transboundary water cooperation) can be used for **further improvement of TB cooperation** and **commitments** to promote signing TB monitoring agreements in:
 1. The Khrami-Debed basin (AM-GE)
 2. The Alazani basins (AZ-GE)

How? A regional workshop on transboundary cooperation (19 October 2023, Geneva, Switzerland)

Plan for 2024:

- South Caucasus regional workshop (AM, AZ, GE) on transboundary cooperation (June 2024)



Achievements: promoted water and health agenda

Armenia

- ✓ Development of a **roadmap for implementation of the EU Drinking Water Directive** under CEPA
- ✓ **Support for discussions on the accession** to the Protocol on Water and Health (workshop organised by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum – 25 October 2023)

Azerbaijan

- Pilot project on **identification of alternative water sources** under changing climate

Georgia

- **Setting up a Working Group on Water and Health** – benefits of accession to the Protocol on Water and Health and support for accession
- **Assessing the equity of access to water and sanitation** in line with EU requirements

Republic of Moldova

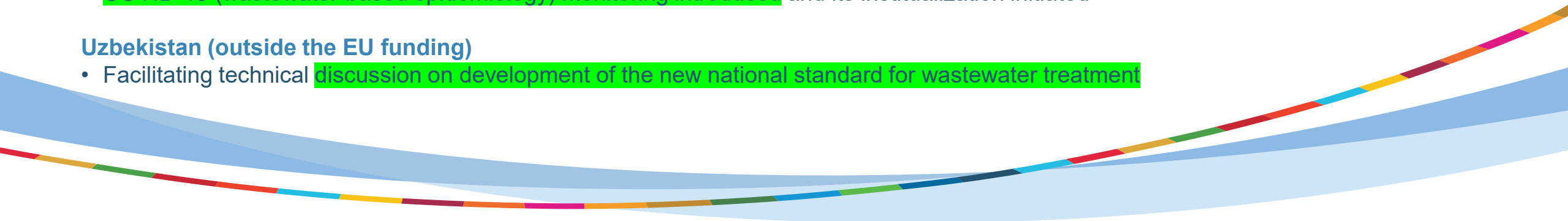
- **Assessing implementation of the National Programme on the PWH** for 2016-2025 and recommendations for future

EAP region

- **COVID-19 (wastewater-based epidemiology) monitoring introduced** and its institutionalization initiated

Uzbekistan (outside the EU funding)

- Facilitating technical **discussion on development of the new national standard for wastewater treatment**



Achievements of NPDs in Central Asia

Although there is no active project for NPD in CA as of March 2023, in the reporting period UNECE team continued advocating for the investment concepts developed before the project end which resulted in:

- ✓ **Confirmed 15 mln EUR grant from the EU & 65 mln EUR loan from EBRD** for *Digitalization of the Great Western Chu Canal in KG* (based on the Chu-Talas Strategic Action Programme) – thanks to strong support of the EUD in KYR
- ✓ **Confirmed interest of EIB** in further development of the investment concept *Fertigation in Southern KZ* (based on the Chu-Talas Strategic Action Programme)
- ✓ **Agreement with the EU-funded project on further development** of the investment concept *Nature based solutions for fortifying banks of the Zerafshon river* (TJ, based on the Zerafshon RBMP)

Lessons learned

- Post-NPD meetings feedback questionnaires demonstrate **high value and interest from governments and stakeholders** of the NPD and provide a list of suggested topics for discussion for the next meetings
- Despite very dedicated staff in the national authorities, there is still overall **deficit of human resources** in the water sector and there are **requests for support** in organizing and facilitating NPDs
- NPDs proved to be instrumental in **development and coordination of the investment concepts**/ bankable projects and linking the authorities and IFIs
- NPDs are a truly **neutral & third-party platform** aligning UN – EU – national priorities
- NPDs **impact discussions on numerous links** with health, sanitation, drinking water, agriculture, finance, infrastructure, finance

Prospects for 2024-27

- NPDs are part of the draft Programme of work under the Water Convention for 2025-2027, supporting implementation of the UN, EU and national commitments
- **Transfer of** even more **ownership** of the Steering Committee meetings to the countries
- Strong **interest** on NPD experience **outside the EECCA region** (Iraq, Africa)
- NPDs in Central Asia will continue under the IKI-funded Nexus Project
- Funding for Eastern Europe and Caucasus is to be confirmed

Partners



EU4Environment
Water and Data in Eastern Partner Countries



WECOOP

EU – Central Asia Cooperation on
Water – Environment – Climate Change

Implementing partners



Co-funded by



Thank you!



WEB

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