

PROJECT PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: **Second assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the UNECE region**

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT: Improved knowledge on the status of transboundary water resources in the UNECE region as a sound basis for continuous bilateral and multilateral cooperation

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: All UNECE countries, with a special focus on countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

TARGET GROUP: Government agencies dealing with the management and monitoring of transboundary waters (both surface and groundwaters)

TENTATIVE TIME FRAME: 1 January 2009 – 31 December 2011

PROJECT BUDGET: Euro 533,000

DONOR: The Government of Finland

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1. Problems and Justification

Transboundary waters connect populations of different countries. They are a major source of income for millions of people and create security, environment, political and social-economic interdependencies. Transboundary river basins cover more than 40 per cent of the European surface of the UNECE region, and of the 56 UNECE member countries, all but three share water resources with one or more other countries. The reasonable and equitable use of transboundary waters is therefore a major challenge in the entire region, and inter-state distribution of water presents a particular challenge to those countries with arid or semi-arid climates in Caucasus, Central Asia and in South-Eastern Europe.

The UNECE Water Convention promotes cooperation on transboundary surface waters and groundwaters, and strengthens their protection and sustainable management. It is a unique framework for sustainable development and security in the UNECE region. Under the Water Convention, riparian Parties shall, at regular intervals, carry out joint or coordinated assessments of the conditions of transboundary waters and the effectiveness of measures taken to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact. In 2003, Parties to the Convention decided to prepare periodic assessments on the pressures, status and trends of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters in the region, in order to be able to assess how the obligations of the Convention were implemented and to evaluate progress achieved.

The first Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters was prepared for the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007). The activity was led by Finland with a strong support by Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Germany, UNESCO, UNEP and OSCE. It was a major undertaking by UNECE countries - both Parties and non-Parties - and the Secretariat of the Water Convention. More than 150 experts took part in the work. The Belgrade Ministerial Conference highly valued this impressive study and invited the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention to prepare the second Assessment for their next Conference, tentatively scheduled to take place in Kazakhstan in 2011.

In addition to updates of the first edition information, the second Assessment will present the progress achieved in the implementation of integrated water resource management and will have a sub-regional focus to obtain more detailed pictures of the different sub-regions. The second Assessment will evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken and identify situations of water crisis, continue to monitor water problems and bring together the knowledge and understanding necessary for further action.

The key goal of the project is to form the basis for non-confrontational relations and cooperation on transboundary waters between riparian states. It aims to facilitate informed decision-making on the management of shared water resources, provide the basis for continuous bilateral and multilateral cooperation under the Water Convention, and support all actors involved at the national, transboundary and regional levels.

The project's findings should lay the ground for strategic directions of work under the Convention and be taken into consideration by the Meetings of the Parties and various political fora, including the "Environment for Europe" Conferences. The Assessment will also be useful source of information for funding by prospective donors.

Water sharing among riparian countries, pressure factors in the basins, future developments and envisaged management measures, increasing groundwater abstraction, pollution from diffuse and point sources, and the impacts of climate change are among the many issues that this project will address. The project will be also evaluate the progress achieved in implementation of integrated water resource management in the transboundary context. The Assessment will provide some insight on social and health aspects. Emerging issues, like impact of climate change will be addressed in most relevant areas. Assessment of ecological status of several transboundary Ramsar sites will be also presented. Surface and groundwaters will be considered in an integrated way.

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2. Stakeholders and beneficiaries

The major target groups for the second Assessment will include national decision makers, water experts and joint bodies. National and regional research institutes and universities will participate and benefit. There will be two products to serve the needs of the different actors: (a) a policy oriented executive summary for decision makers; and (b) a more extensive report, similar to the first Assessment, for other readers.

The assessment will cover the Asian and the European part of the UNECE region. It is expected that the second Assessment will include more than 140 transboundary rivers and more than 30 transboundary lakes, as well as more than 120 transboundary groundwater aquifers. Higher attention will be given to the countries of Eastern Europe Caucasus and Central Asia and South Eastern Europe which are facing the biggest problems and for which information had never been produced in a systematic, comprehensive way. Special emphasis will be given to the Central Asia sub-region. This will facilitate regional discussions on water issues between the Central Asian Governments. As far as possible, non-UNECE countries sharing waters with UNECE countries (e.g. Afghanistan, China, Mongolia and Islamic Republic of Iran) will be included in the Assessment.

3. Logical framework

Project Logic	Indicators	Assumptions and Risks
<p>Development Objective:</p> <p>Non-confrontational relations and cooperation on transboundary waters between states</p>	<p>Legal documents, intergovernmental agreements, active monitoring programmes, effective information sharing over the borders. Ratification of the Water Convention</p>	<p>Political willingness to engage in cooperation and non-confrontational relations</p>
<p>Project Purpose:</p> <p>Provide basis for continuous bilateral and multilateral cooperation in managing transboundary waters under the Water Convention</p>	<p>Level of participation in the assessment process. Reporting by countries to the Meeting of Parties to the Water Convention and other Convention's bodies</p>	<p>Political commitment by the governments</p>
<p>Results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 2nd assessment report to support informed decision-making by providing an up-to-date evaluation of the progress of transboundary water cooperation under the Water Convention 2. A framework for monitoring and benchmarking progress with the implementation of the Water Convention 3. Self-assessment and review of regulations related to transboundary waters carried out by the countries 4. Increased visibility of the issues and attention of decision-makers to transboundary concerns 5. A partnership developed for assessing the status of transboundary waters in the UNECE region 	<p>National experts surveyed. Endorsement of the data and drafts by the riparian states. Assessment adopted by the relevant bodies under the Convention Assessment report edited and published (summer 2011) Sub-regional meetings successfully conducted. Spin of reviews and initiatives of amendments of legislation, regulations and agreements Media coverage, references in publications, NGO participation level Inputs from partners into the process (co-hosting sub-regional meetings, provision of data, draft texts)</p>	<p>Sufficient, detailed and good quality information received in the process Active participation and interest of the riparian countries Media active and interested Commitment of partners to provide the agreed deliverables</p>

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Project Logic	Indicators	Assumptions and Risks
<p>Activities:</p> <p>Activity 1 Survey among countries on the status of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwater; collection of data; preparation of the compiled information sheets</p> <p>Activity 2 Subregional working meetings for the collection of data, its verification and its joint acceptance by the riparian countries, as well as for the promotion of the Convention</p> <p>Activity 3 Targeted consultations with countries, as required</p> <p>Activity 4 Preparation of the draft documents and maps, followed by reviews and consultations for the necessary endorsements.</p> <p>Activity 5. Endorsement of text, data and other material through meetings of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and other meetings related to the Environment for Europe process</p> <p>Activity 5 Editing, layout and publishing the 2nd Assessment report</p> <p>Activity 6 Negotiations on the Assessment and submission of the Assessment to the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference</p> <p>Activity 7: Active and planned media contacts, press releases, articles and interviews in journals and press</p>	<p>Means</p> <p>Project coordinator and other members of the Water Convention's secretariat for the project coordination and the overall preparation of the second Assessment</p> <p>Water Convention focal points and other national experts providing and validating data and agreeing on the assessment at the transboundary level.</p> <p>Officials involved in the Environment for Europe process engaged in the process</p> <p>Consultants to assist in the substantial preparation of the assessment, and for the translation, editing, layout, production of maps and printing</p> <p>Local organizers for the logistic organization of sub-regional workshop</p>	<p>Costs</p> <p>See budget below</p>

4. Institutional arrangements

UNECE will be responsible for the overall management of the project, preparation of the inputs, finalizing and publishing of the second Assessment.

In the implementation of the project UNECE will closely cooperate with OSCE, EEA, International Water Assessment Center, UNESCO, International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), Global Water Partnership and Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. A main role will be played by the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), the Water Convention's collaborative centre hosted by the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute.

5. Project personnel

UNECE staff

The secretary of the UNECE Water Convention will supervise project implementation and manage the finances of the project.

An adequately qualified project staff member responsible for the preparation of the second Assessment has been hired from June 2009 to coordinate the preparation of the second assessment. She is responsible for the management of the project including the organization of all steps (regional workshops, meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment), the contracts and working arrangements with other partners and with consultants, the collection of relevant information and the drafting of the second assessment.

Another member of the UNECE secretariat provides part-time assistance.

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Consultants/Recipients of grants/contractors

There will be different consultants/recipients of grants/contractors involved in the whole project:

1. For assisting with the substantial preparation of the second assessment: assistance in assessment of sub-regions and/or assistance with thematic aspects of the assessment, such as transboundary groundwaters
2. Assistance for the preparation of maps and other graphic support for the final publication
3. Editing of the assessment text
4. Layout of the publication
5. Printing of the publication and of other promotional material linked to it

Local organizers

Local organizers will be hired for organizing sub-regional workshops (travel and accommodation of participants, logistical aspects, meeting venue, interpretation, international and local transport, etc).

6. Inputs of other parties

Inputs of participating countries

Each UNECE country will nominate two or more experts to participate in the project, provide the information required for project implementation and host a meeting(s) as required, and, in general, take sufficient action towards the achievement of the project goals.

Inputs by collaborating partners

The International Water Assessment Center will support the preparation of the second Assessment by assisting in the compilation of datasheets and organizing sub-regional meetings.

IGRAC and UNESCO will support the preparation of the assessment of transboundary groundwaters.

EEA will facilitate the preparation of the assessment of transboundary waters shared by EEA countries by providing UNECE with the relevant information at its disposal.

Inputs by UNECE

Staff time.