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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON  
THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY  
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

**Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management**

First meeting

Geneva, 15 December 2004

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**CAPACITY FOR WATER COOPERATION (CWC)  
in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia \***

Prepared by the secretariat

1. This document describes the Capacity for Water Cooperation (CWC) in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia project: its aim, the recent developments and the future challenges.
2. The Working Group is invited to advise on the further development of the project, in particular provide substantial input to the upcoming workshops and assistance in seeking funding for the 2005 and 2006 workshops.

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\* Late submission due to consultations with Governments and international organizations to secure financing for the 2004 and 2005 workshops.

## **I. BACKGROUND**

3. Transboundary water resources play a significant role in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). A great number of major water basins that were previously national within the former Soviet Union are now transboundary. Managing these waters in a sustainable way requires effective transboundary cooperation. Significant experience was gained in the region in recent years in different river basins. However, contacts between the experts involved are limited, and their experience and knowledge are not efficiently shared and used.

4. Since its adoption, the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes has offered a framework for cooperation on transboundary waters providing support to countries in many areas. In November 2003, the Parties at their third meeting decided to focus their work on EECCA, where the challenge of water resources management is acute. A specific item was included in the work plan 2004-2006 on "Integrated management of transboundary waters in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia" aiming to develop activities supporting integrated river basin management and water protection in the region. The project "Capacity for Water Cooperation (CWC) in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia" is developed under this work plan item.

5. The project will be a contribution to the Environmental Strategy for countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as to the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development (EECCA component of the EU Water Initiative).

6. The project is developed and implemented by the UNECE secretariat together with a number of national and international partners (e.g. Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Global Environment Facility (GEF), International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN)).

## **II. OBJECTIVE**

7. The CWC project is intended to strengthen the capacity of transboundary water management in EECCA. The objective is to create a framework for cross-fertilization and exchange of experience between river basins and countries on regulatory, institutional, methodological and other aspects of integrated management of transboundary waters, and, at the same time, bring in valuable experience from other parts of the UNECE region. CWC also aims to establish a network of EECCA experts involved in transboundary water management who are used to cooperating and sharing knowledge.

## **III. PROJECT OUTLINE**

8. The CWC project will provide multidisciplinary training to experts from EECCA over three years. The target group involves transboundary waters managers, representatives of established joint bodies, experts, researchers and academics with a role in transboundary water management, and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the 12 EECCA countries. Participants will be selected among candidates proposed by the main national authorities involved in transboundary water management in the 12 EECCA countries. They will provide expert studies,

undertake analyses, prepare country reports and propose future action on different topics related to the themes of the workshops, and, if needed, be involved in the workshops' preparation and organization.

9. The training will be developed around a series of workshops, to be generally held in different EECCA countries. Each workshop will be built around two modules. The first module (in general one day) will focus on a specific transboundary river basin, related to the workshop's location, and will review the progress achieved and the existing problems in the river basin. If possible, visits to the joint commission or technical excursions to the basin will be organized. The second module (in general two days) will focus on one of the following aspects of transboundary water management:

- The legal basis for cooperation;
- The work of transboundary commissions;
- Joint monitoring and assessment of shared water basins, including early warning and alarm systems;
- Access to and exchange of information, and public participation;
- Integrated water resources management and river basin management planning, including the EU Water Framework Directive;
- Shared river basins and the relation to regional seas; and
- The application of the Protocol on Water and Health.

10. By the end of the project, the main aspects of transboundary water cooperation will thus be covered and an overview of the existing state of cooperation in the region, common problems and solutions, available best practices and lessons learned will be available.

#### **IV. OUTPUT**

11. The project will document important principles, successful approaches and case studies in EECCA. After each workshop, a publication in English and Russian will be produced with conclusions and selected material from the workshop. A project web site has been created with all relevant documentation ([www.unece.org/env/water/cwc.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/water/cwc.htm)).

12. It is also expected that the CWC project will encourage participants to take their cooperation further and develop follow-up proposals.

13. The results and recommendations from the project will be reviewed at the fourth meeting of the Parties in 2006 to guide the future work under the Convention.

#### **V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

14. The first workshop of the series on the legal basis for cooperation will be held on 22-24 November 2004 in Kiev (Ukraine). The workshop will be funded by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, and arranged in cooperation with the Ukrainian Ministry for Environmental Protection, the State Water Management Committee of Ukraine and the UNDP/GEF Dnieper Basin Environment Programme.

15. The second workshop will be on access to and exchange of information, and public participation. It will be held in early June 2005 in St. Petersburg (Russian Federation) and will most probably be organized in cooperation with the NGO Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation. Funding has been secured from GEF through IW:LEARN.

16. The third workshop on joint monitoring and assessment of shared water basins, including early warning and alarm systems, is planned in Tbilisi (Georgia), in autumn 2005. The Government of Finland is interested in co-organizing it and is in the process of securing funding for it.

17. The UNEP Global Programme of Action has been contacted and invited to co-organize the workshop on shared river basins and the relation to regional seas to be held in 2005 if funding can be secured. Possible locations are Baku (Azerbaijan), Odessa (Ukraine), Kaliningrad (Russian Federation) or Istanbul (Turkey).

18. For the other workshops on the work of river basin commissions, on integrated water resources management and river basin management planning, including the EU Water Framework Directive and on the application of the Water and Health Protocol, the UNECE secretariat has identified possible sponsors, locations and co-organizers although funding has not yet been secured.

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