

Ongoing National Policy Dialogues

Since 2006, under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) national policy dialogues on integrated water resources management have been carried out in Armenia, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine.

In 2010, policy dialogues are starting in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

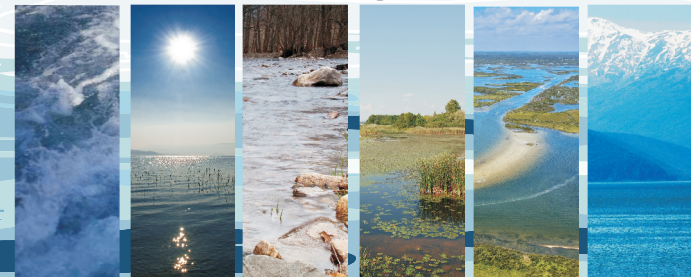
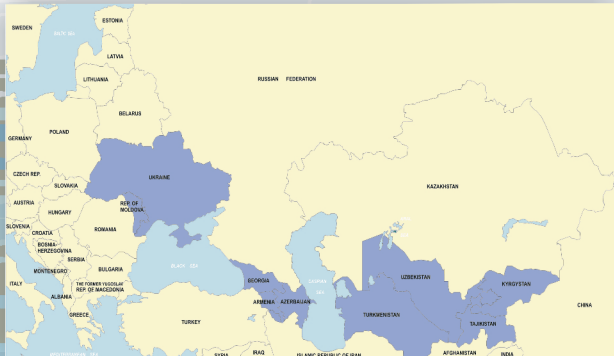
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National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resource Management



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National Policy Dialogues

National policy dialogues on integrated water resources management (IWRM) and water supply and sanitation (WSS) are the main operational instrument of the European Union Water Initiative Component for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). This Initiative was launched in 2002 at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The Initiative is a partnership aiming at contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targets set at WSSD for water supply and sanitation, within an integrated approach to water resources management.

The water-related MDGs and WSSD targets

- Halve by the year 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water
- Halve by the year 2015 the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation
- Develop integrated water resources management and efficiency plans

Support to the national policy dialogues on integrated water resources management is provided by the European Commission, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Switzerland.

Activities

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is the strategic partner to support the policy dialogue process on integrated water resources management. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is the strategic partner for water supply and sanitation.

The UNECE-supported policy dialogue provides practical assistance to strengthen integrated water resources management in EECCA countries. Background documents include the UNECE Water Convention, the Protocol on Water and Health, and the EU Water Framework Directive.

The policy dialogues are based on consultations with ministries, agencies and institutions (including science and academia), non-governmental and other national and international organizations.

The dialogues are conducted under the leadership of a high-level government representative such as the Deputy Minister of Water Resources or Chair of the State Water Committee.

National steering committees usually meet twice a year. They discuss key national water policy issues and adopt decisions relating to the national policy dialogues. International and donor organizations are invited to policy dialogue meetings.

Expected outcomes

The main outcome of the policy dialogues are so-called “policy packages” such as legislative acts, strategies, ministerial orders and plans for implementation.

Emphasis is also placed on the implementation of already adopted policies. This is done through pilot projects or by providing technical assistance.

What is a policy package?

- It is a coherent mix of policy tools developed to achieve environmental policy objectives in a cost-effective manner and avoiding policy conflicts. A policy tool is a new law, regulation, water quality standard, tariff system, etc.

To support policy development, UNECE provides funding towards the organization of steering committee meetings or to pilot projects that feed into developing specific policies.

As well as carrying out their original function of supporting the inclusion of the principles of integrated water resources management into national policies, the national policy dialogues and the steering committees have become a national coordination mechanism for water-related projects carried out under the auspices of international organizations and countries.