

EAP Task Force

Document 31

**Joint Meeting of the EU Water Initiative's EECCA
Working Group and the EAP Task Force Environmental Finance
and Water Networks**

29 March – 1 April 2005, Chisinau, Moldova

**Minutes of Meeting EUWI-EECCA Working Group meeting
Stockholm 18 August 2004
Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development
EU Water Initiative – EECCA component**

ACTION REQUIRED: for approval and endorsement

1. Background

This document presents the proposed organisational structure of the EECCA component of the EU Water Initiative. It builds on the description of the Programme Document¹, presented at the Ministerial Meeting in Kiev in May 2003, and is amended as deemed necessary to reflect later organisational developments and decisions, notably the organisational framework approved for the entire EUWI²

2. Organisation and co-ordination of the Partnership

The implementation and co-ordination mechanisms build on existing institutions and mechanisms, as appropriate. Existing mechanisms and organisations that have been considered comprise those related to on-going collaboration such as the Environment for Europe process as well as national, regional and international organisations. Several of the relevant organisations have expressed interest in contributing to the Partnership. As the Partnership contributes to the implementation of the water-related activities of the EECCA Environment Strategy, it is important that clear links are established between the co-ordination and implementation mechanisms of the Partnership and those that have responsibility for the implementation of the EECCA Environment Strategy³. The organisational set-up, co-ordination and management mechanisms of the Partnership are illustrated in Figure 1. The different elements and their respective roles and responsibilities are briefly described below.

The Working Group of the Partnership is responsible for overseeing the implementation of EUWI-EECCA which includes two components: a) Water supply and sanitation, and b) integrated water resources management, including transboundary river basin management and regional seas issues. For each component, existing supporting mechanisms will be relied upon, as appropriate, and the WG will provide for liaison with key stakeholders. ToR for the Working Group have been developed and describe the operation and constitution of the Working Group.

¹ "Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development – EECCA Component of the EU Water Initiative. Programme Document", submitted by Government of Denmark to the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", Kiev 21-23 May 2003

² "EU Water Initiative. Organisational Framework and Modalities", Final version (9 July 2004), by EU Commission

³ "Environmental Partnerships in the UNECE Region: Environment Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia", Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", Kiev, 21-23 May 2003, by the Steering group on Environment Strategy for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

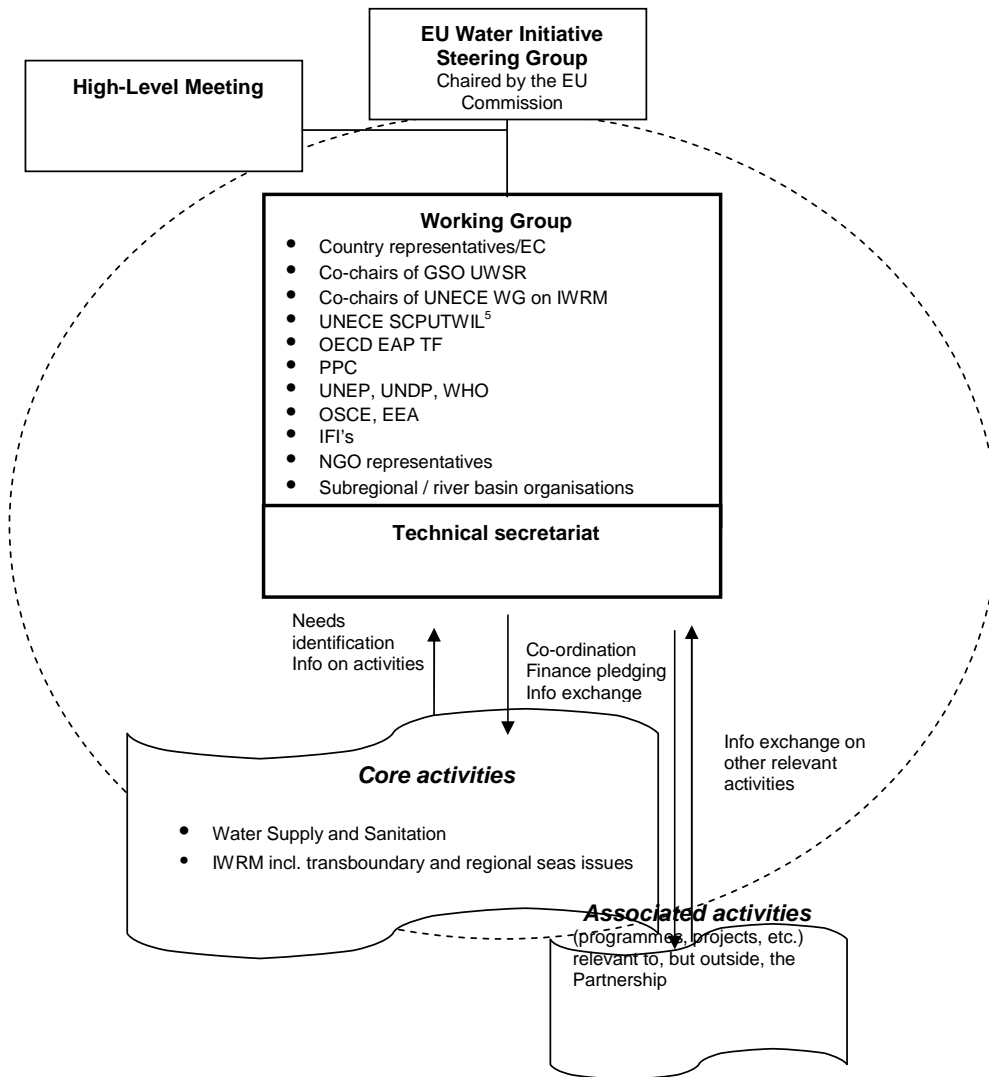


Figure 1 Organisational structure of the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development

3. Co-ordination mechanisms for the thematic components

The co-ordinating mechanisms to be set in place will build, whenever appropriate, on those institutions and organisations who have supported the “Environment for Europe” process and the development of the “Environmental Partnerships in the UNECE Region: Environment Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia”, notably the OECD EAP TF on Water Supply and Sanitation and the UNECE Secretariat on IWRM.

Comment: If the EAP TF will be restructured to include all activities in EECCA region, there will be no need for separate co-ordination mechanisms

Water supply and sanitation

Both the OECD EAP Task Force Secretariat and WHO Euro have been charged with facilitating roles on water and sanitation aspects of the EECCA Environment Strategy. The Project Preparation Committee is also an important actor when it comes to issues of mobilisation of financial resources. The existing Group of Senior Officials for Urban Water Sector Reform established within the Task Force Framework makes an essential input to this component, especially on urban water supply and

⁵ Secretariat for the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International

sanitation. Members of the Group include EECCA government representatives responsible for urban water, donors, IFIs, NGOs and the private sector.

Existing activities make important contributions to EUWI-EECCA through:

- assessing the priority needs of the EECCA countries, and recommending on key donor activities that would be relevant and effective to address those needs;
- supporting a process of mutual learning by doing among partners in the region through exchange of information and experience
- carrying out various types of analyses and disseminating the results
- promoting partnership among EECCA governments, private sector, NGOs, academia, international organisations, donors and IFIs
- supporting implementation of the partnership objectives through their respective work programmes
- contributing to establishing indicators and monitoring the progress towards the goals of the partnership

Integrated water resources management

UNECE is an important actor in this area inter alia through the preparation and assistance in the implementation of important international conventions like the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), the 1999 London Protocol on Water and Health and the 2003 Kiev Protocol on Civil Liability for Damage to Transboundary Waters.

Cooperation with other potential partners active in the region (such as UNEP, UNDP, WHO, OSCE, GWP, RECs, etc) should also be actively sought as all these bodies have expressed their willingness to participate actively in the coordination and implementation of the partnership's activities.

Existing activities make important contributions to EUWI-EECCA through:

- Assessing priority needs for EECCA countries, recommending key activities that would be relevant and effective to address those needs
- Supporting a process a 'mutual learning by doing' among partners in the region through exchange of information and experience, including workshops and training courses
- Carrying out various types of analyses and disseminating the results
- Promoting the collaboration between national ministries/partner groups and the different transboundary and regional networks in the EECCA area as well the regional environmental centres.
- Supporting implementation of EUWI-EECCA objectives to be defined through their respective work programmes
- Contributing to establishing indicators and monitoring progress towards the goals of the partnership.

The recent enlargement of the EU provides new opportunities in the field of IWRM in the EECCA region, especially for those EECCA partners that share river basins with the enlarged EU as the EU Water Framework Directive foresees that EU Member States should cooperate with their non-EU neighbours on shared transboundary river basins with a view to developing transboundary river basin management plans. The process of joint activities between the WFD and the EUWI, which is being developed as part of the EUWI, will offer further avenues for exchanges between the EU and EECCA on lessons learned from the WFD experience which may be of interest to EECCA partners.

4. Overall co-ordination and guidance – links to other fora

The Working Group: The Working Group is responsible for overseeing the implementation of EUWI-EECCA. See separate ToR for further details.

The Inter-governmental Co-ordination body for the EECCA Environment Strategy (the EAP Task Force): The EAP Task Force, established under the Environment for Europe process, was asked by Ministers at the 2003 Kiev Environment for Ministers meeting to facilitate, support and monitor the implementation of the EECCA Environment Strategy. Therefore, the Working Group will report

regularly to the EAP Task Force on the progress of implementation of the EUWI-EECCA as the latter is a contribution to the EECCA Environment Strategy.

The High-Level Meeting (HLM): This forum will be used as the main political decision-making body of the Partnership. All major stakeholder groups relevant to the Strategic Partnership will be invited to participate in HLMs. Therefore, this forum serves the purpose of bringing together in an inclusive manner the water sector stakeholders to endorse EUWI-EECCA activities.

The key purpose of the High-Level Meeting is:

- to function as an overall guiding body to EUWI-EECCA,
- to function as a platform for exchange of information and experience among the partners about aid flows, policies, financing strategies and mechanisms and other issues related to the water sector in the region.
- to function as a platform where the stakeholders from the EECCA countries can present their needs and priorities,
- to function as a platform where donors and IFIs can present their policies and priority areas in terms of sectors and countries/regions they want to support. This should facilitate a better co-ordination of aid flow in the region.
- to approve periodical Action Programmes and priority projects of EUWI-EECCA
- to develop recommendations, as appropriate, for submission to the EUWI Steering Group

The lead country or organisation will ensure that secretariat support is made available to assist the Working Group in its tasks as well as to ensure the smooth running of EUWI-EECCA.

This secretarial support will co-ordinate and manage the day-to-day co-ordination and representational functions, which can not be done at the component level, under the guidance of the Working Group.

The work will be closely co-ordinated with support agencies and organisations to avoid duplications with existing activities (eg EAP TF).

The EUWI Steering Group: The EUWI Steering Group (EUWI SG) is the principal decision-making body on the EU-side of the global EU Water Initiative, chaired by the EU Commission, guiding and overseeing the global EU Water Initiative. The Working Group, typically through the lead country or organisation, will liaise with and report to the EUWI SG on progress in the implementation of the Strategic Partnership and its two thematic components. Furthermore, the Working Group will submit ToR and periodical work programmes for approval to the EUWI SG (subject to initial approval by the High-Level Meeting).

5. Country level co-ordination

The Partnership will use and rely on existing implementation mechanisms at the national level, bringing together the important national stakeholders from government, private sector and civil society as well as the EU and other donor representatives and international organisations. If such co-ordinating mechanisms do not exist at country level, they may be established and supported through the Partnership. In relation to the Partnership the main functions of country level co-ordination groups will among other things be:

- to function as a platform for exchange of information and experience among the partners about aid flows and policies related to water in the country,
- to facilitate co-ordination of identification and implementation of priority actions at national level.

Minutes of Meeting
EUWI-EECCA Working Group meeting
Stockholm 18 August 2004

Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development
EU Water Initiative – EECCA component

Participants: (see attached list)

Agenda: (see attached agenda)

Welcome addresses

Ditte Holse, Danish EPA, welcomed participants to the Working Group (WG) meeting and reiterated the decision of the Danish Government to step down as lead country for the EECCA component of the EUWI as of 22 October 2004.

Sergey Natalchuk, MNR Russia, also welcomed the audience and urged the meeting to focus on implementation of the decisions made at the second High-Level Meeting (HLM-II) in Moscow, February 2004.

François Wakenhut, EC, announced the take-over by the European Commission from Denmark of the lead country role for one year starting 22 October 2004.

Status of the EU Water Initiative - EECCA

Palle Lindgaard Jørgensen, DHI, gave a comprehensive presentation of the achievements, remaining challenges and recommendations for further action of the EECCA component, based on the status report prepared by the Danish technical secretariat in advance of the meeting.

Some of the key recommendations emerging were:

- Focus EUWI interventions particularly on the strategic aspects, such as financing strategies and plans, IWRM 2005 plans, transboundary river basin agreements, co-financing of investment projects
- Develop a strong instrument for prioritisation and co-ordination of donor support (action programme, financing)
- Continue analysing the water sector in EECCA and keep the political dialogue going
- Engage donors and IF's more actively
- Report progress and lessons learnt (use web-site)
- Make information readily available.

Discussion:

Wakenhut mentioned that it would be essential to go back to the roots of the Initiative whose two key objectives were to 1) improve co-ordination of existing assistance, in particular from EC and its member states, and also to 2) catalyse additional funding notably to finance, when relevant, those building blocks presented by EECCA partners that best contribute to the objectives of the EUWI.

Yessekin noted that the main gap in the EECCA region is the national planning and prioritisation mechanisms and processes on IWRM. There is a lack of process ownership and institutional fragmentation.

Vermont agreed with *Yessekin* and added that donors also need to do their homework at the national level: to ensure a better internal co-ordination between government agencies.

Ibrekk noted that gaps on service delivery should not be overlooked. The international targets are on water *and* sanitation. What are the gaps on sanitation?

Trombitsky found that the assessment of the status on IWRM is optimistic. In fact, all existing plans are only paper work – there is no implementation going on. A stronger NGO participation is needed, also within the EUWI, and recommended to the EC that two NGO representatives from each regional component be invited to participate in the Steering Group of the global initiative.

Wakenhut replied that the Steering Group needed decision-making strength and therefore required a limited number of participants. Stakeholder representation to the SG would be reviewed after one year if needed.

Libert found that the status report is donor-oriented. What we really need is commitment from EECCA countries. Efforts should be targeted to pursue this.

Slesarenok supported *Trombitsky's* point. There is a lot of nice paper plans but the reality is poor. A lot of waste of donor money happens. Part of the reason is improper design of projects – it needs to take better account of local conditions and affordability of users.

Slesarenok also suggested identifying and including in the status report the benefits of the EUWI for different stakeholders in order to get the commitment for the EECCA countries.

Kindler reminded that full implementation of IWRM takes time – it will not be accomplished by 2005. But we should not avoid identifying obvious actions and priorities. The WG should write simple guidance documents on this.

Vermont added that the IWRM 2005 plan should be seen as an element in a continuous and revolving process, not a one-off exercise.

Yessekin estimated that what can be achieved by 2005 is an inventory of the situation on IWRM in each country, not much more.

Decision:

The meeting decided to invite comments to the draft status report until 1 September. Based on the comments received the technical secretariat would finalize the report by mid September in order to be submitted to the Ministerial meeting in Tbilisi on 21 October 2004 under the Environment for Europe process (“Kiev+1” meeting).

Organisational framework and modalities of the WG and the EECCA component

Henrik Larsen, DHI, presented the proposed organisational set-up of the EECCA component of the EUWI. The proposal takes its point of departure in the organisational previously set-up by the WG in the Programme Document presented at the Ministerial meeting in Kiev, 2003. A recent (9 July 2004) document on organisational framework and modalities for the overall EUWI now requires certain changes to the original EUWI-EECCA set-up. These requirements have been the main determinant for the changes proposed in the new organisational set-up for the EECCA component. The main changes are:

- EECCA Steering group → EECCA Working Group
- EECCA countries and member states more directly involved (one person from each country/organisation would be assigned as liaison officer)
- Support facility → Technical Secretariat
- WG subordinated to EUWI Steering Group - not Multistakeholder Forum
- High-Level Meeting institutionalised as a mechanism for advice and political commitment + work programme approval

Larsen also presented draft Terms of Reference for the WG. The ToR are largely based on the recent (9 July 2004) document on organisational framework and modalities for the overall EUWI.

Discussion:

Soldatenko found that it was important to involve the end-users/beneficiaries more in the process. They are the ones who know best the problems and often also about sustainable solutions.

Gillespie found that the reality in EECCA countries has to be taken into account in the organisational set-up. No one person can represent an EECCA country in the Working Group due to the widespread institutional fragmentation.

Yessekin supported *Soldatenko*. The notion of “public” in the organisational set-up is too broad. We must involve organisations working directly with water issues more (e.g. water user associations). Also the Regional Environment Centres should be directly involved for institutional support at subregional and national levels.

Korobova suggested to introduce a section on the roles and responsibilities of the technical secretariat in the ToR.

Decision:

The meeting decided to invite comments to the draft documents until 1 September. Based on the comments received the technical secretariat would finalize the proposed organisational set-up and ToR by 1 October. The organisational set-up and the ToR would then be presented for approval at the next WG meeting.

Presentation of elements of the TACIS regional programme

Jan Behrens, EC, presented an overview of ongoing and planned water projects with TACIS support in the EECCA region. Special focus was put on the ongoing preparation for the TACIS Regional Action Programmes 2005-2006 with funds in the order of €30 million. The following indications for priority elements for these funds were given:

- Investment facilitation and investment co-financing (WSS and IWRM)
- Transboundary river management (IWRM)
- Water governance in Caucasus and Central Asia (WSS and IWRM)
- Other issues to be identified

Yessekin mentioned the importance of the Central Asian SD initiative (“Invitation to partnership”) as a part of the TACIS regional programme.

Yessekin and *Trombitsky* urged EC to consider making more use of the NGO expertise and local knowledge in preparation of projects. They also requested the establishment of a “small grants fund” for NGO’s.

Cotruta wanted the facility to focus more of on the western part of EECCA, not only on Caucasus and Central Asia.

Behrens responded that all EECCA countries can receive funds under the facility, but that the EC has decided that the main priority will be Caucasus and Central Asia. The western part of EECCA has already received substantial funds through national programmes.

Work Programme of the EUWI-EECCA component

Ditte Holse, Danish EPA, presented a work programme for the component covering the remaining period of the Danish lead country role, i.e. August – October 2004.

She mentioned Denmark’s plan of presenting a status and “handing-over” the lead country role to EC at the Tbilisi Ministerial meeting, requiring documents for this purpose to be submitted to the organizers by mid September.

She also emphasised the need for countries and organisations wanting to participate in the WG to nominate one liaison officer (and an alternate).

EUWI-EECCA component input to Kiev+1 meeting

Brendan Gillespie, EAP Task Force - OECD Secretariat, gave an overview of the preparations for the Ministerial meeting under the Environment for Europe process in Tbilisi 21-22 October 2004. One aim of the meeting is to “discuss the action programmes and partnerships to implement the EECCA Environment Strategy elaborated over this period and to provide additional impetus for their development and implementation”. The EUWI-EECCA is an important element in implementing the water aspects of the Strategy.

Libert raised the issue of resources in relation to UNECE’s role in implementing the Environment Strategy and the EUWI-EECCA. Unless additional resources are provided, the UNECE Working Group on IWRM under the Water Convention cannot engage in IWRM at national level. In order to make efficient use of resources he recommended arranging back-to-back meetings with related initiatives whenever possible.

Next Working Group meeting

Wakenhut informed that EC would probably call the next WG meeting in the first quarter of 2005, probably back-to-back with another – yet unidentified – meeting.