

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE

# 6<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE ON INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN GEORGIA

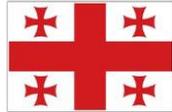
October 2, 2018  
Tbilisi, Georgia

The 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on Integrated Water Resources Management in Georgia was chaired by Ms. Nino Tandilashvili Deputy Minister of the Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and Ms. Nino Tkhilava the Head of the Environment and Climate Change Department of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA). The objectives of the Steering Committee meeting were as follows: to provide updates on the status of new water legislation and institutional set up and developments in environmental and water policies in Georgia; to discuss progress and next steps in implementing the European Water Initiative Plus (EUWI+) programme in Georgia and to receive feedback from local stakeholders; to provide a platform for coordination of donor activities in the water sector in Georgia.



## *6<sup>th</sup> Meetings of the Steering Committee of the NPD on Integrated Water Resources Management in Georgia*

In the **opening session** welcoming remarks were made by Ms Nino Tandilashvili –Deputy Minister of MEPA, Mr. Alexandre Darras, EU Delegation to Georgia and Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE. During the session vital role of NDP was stressed in ensuring proper coordination between national stakeholders and international projects for meeting the country's commitments under the Association Agreement with the EU.



The first session of the Steering Committee meeting was devoted to the progress under Result 1 of the EUWI+ Project, updates on the development of new water legislation and the National Water Strategy, to process of the ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health and the status of transboundary cooperation. During the first part of this session presentations on "Status of the Draft Water, its bylaws and its harmonization" and "Status of transboundary cooperation" was made by Ms. Mariam Makarova, Head of the Water Division of the Department of Environment and Climate Change, MEPA. The updates on the ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health was presented by Mr. Alisher Mamadzhanov, UNECE.

The presentation were followed by Q&A session, during which were discussed: ongoing process of adoption of new Law on Water Resources Management by the end of this year, challenges during this process and planed activities of the MEPA for facilitating this process. Participants also underlined importance of ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health for the country to support implementation of its requirements considered by the newly developed National Environmental and Health Action Plan of Georgia.

Based on the results of the presentations and follow-up discussion the following SC decisions were adopted:

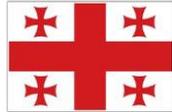
- The Steering Committee appreciated the support of the EUWI+ program in the development of the final draft of the new Law on Water Resources Management and its selected by-laws, underlined the need to conclude stakeholder consultations on the draft law and expressed hope that it will be adopted by the end of the year. To facilitate process of adoption of new Law UNECE will support the MEPA to coordinate the stakeholders brainstorming meeting for Parliamentarians and high-level decision makers before submission the Draft Law to the Parliament of Georgia.
- The Steering Committee took notice of the past preparatory work conducted in Georgia for the implementation of the main obligations of the Protocol on Water and Health and stressed the need to continue the official process of ratification of the Protocol.
- The Steering Committee recommended to conclude negotiations on Kura agreement with Azerbaijan and expressed interest to develop cooperation on Khrami-Debed basin between environment and water agencies of Georgia and Armenia.

The second part of this session was dedicated to development of "The policy paper providing a vision for further policy developments in preparing the National Water Strategy of Georgia. The presentation on "Setting up long-term priorities for the water sector to overcome existing and future challenges" was made by Ms. Tatiana Efimova, OECD and Mr. Zurab Jincharadze, the national expert from OECD side.

During the Q&A session were discussed short- and long-term priorities for the Country to overcome existing and future challenges beyond implementation of water reforms. Members of beneficiary institutions stressed the issue related to future impact of reforms in the water sector on the different stakeholders. In addition, importance of economic instruments in this process was highlighted.

Based on the results of the presentation and follow-up discussion the following SC decision was adopted:





- The Steering Committee welcomed the presentation of the conceptual vision of the long-term water strategy of Georgia and called on national stakeholders to cooperate closely with experts in upcoming phase of strategy formulation.

The **second session** of the meeting was devoted to progress under result 2 and 3 of the EUWI+.

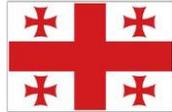
EUWI+ Project Leader Mr. Michael Sutter made a detailed presentation on the project progress in Georgia, providing an update on the laboratory development, and surface and groundwater monitoring.

The session was continued by Mr Pierre Henry de Villeneuve, (Office International de l'Eau/International Office for Water) from his side a presentation on Planning & Implementing of Integrated River Basin Management Plans was made, particularly focused on development of Alazani-Iori and Khrami-Debed River Basins Management Plans and on implementation of existing RBMP on Chorokhi. The presentation was also made by Ms. Yunona Videnina, Thematic Leader for Communication and Stakeholder Involvement, Ms. Yunona presented issues related to stakeholder involvement (RBMP & Transboundary aspects) ; development, regular update and implementation of communication strategy for RBM planning and the project visibility.

The presentation was followed by Q&A session, among other issues needs for territorializing the national water policy at the basin scale through participative River Basin Management Planning was discussed and importance of strengthening of monitoring databases and laboratory capacity for implementation of EU WFD directives was highlighted.

Based on the results of the presentation and follow-up discussions the following SC decisions were adopted:

- The Steering Committee expressed appreciation of the inclusion of additional 2 regional laboratories (Kutaisi and Batumi) as partners in EUWI+ laboratory development support. The concept of sustainability and its specific prerequisites, e.g. legal basis, budgets competent staff and professional processes is acknowledged.
- The beneficiary institutions appreciated that agreements for the start of tenders for supplies, work and services for laboratory and monitoring infrastructure are well on its way. It is acknowledged that continuous high-level attention is required to fulfil the proposed ambiguous timetables.
- From expressed satisfaction that the preparation of pilot river basin management plans (RBMPs) for the Alazani/Iori and the Khrami-Debed have started in Summer 2018 and stressed the need to increase capacity of relevant civil servants while the consultants are developing the RBMPs.
- It was recommended to follow up on implementation of existing RBMP on Chorokhi such as by identifying pilot implementation of actions to be financed from the investment plan of the project.
- The Steering Committee stressed need to develop a communication strategy for participative RBM Planning in the near future.
- The Steering Committee highlighted need to conclude the discussions for the purchase of a web-server for water information in line with data management strategy.



The aim of **the third session** was providing a platform for co-ordination and exploring synergies with and between other activities on water, implemented by donors and international organizations. During the session activities of other international projects working in the field of water resources management were presented. During the Q&A session SC members and participants underlined the significant role of synergies with other international projects implemented in Georgia to get sustainability of project activities.

During the **closing session** of the 6th Meeting of the SC of the NPD on Integrated Water Resources Management in Georgia the Chairman recalled the Steering Committee decisions made, as follows:

### DECISIONS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

1. To continue support from the EUWI+ program in the development of the draft new Water Law and its selected by-laws and to conclude stakeholder consultations on the draft law.
2. To continue the official process of ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health taking into account past preparatory work conducted in Georgia for the implementation of the main obligations of the Protocol
3. To continue preparation of the conceptual vision of the long-term water strategy of Georgia with close cooperation of national stakeholders in upcoming phase of strategy formulation.
4. To conclude negotiations on Kura agreement with Azerbaijan and to initiate cooperation on Khrami-Debed basin between relevant agencies of Georgia and Armenia..
5. To increase capacity of relevant civil servants while the consultants are developing the pilot river basin management plans (RBMPs) for the Alazani/Iori and the Khrami-Debed RBMPs.
6. To follow up on implementation of existing RBMP on Chorokhi by identifying pilot f actions to be financed from the investment plan of the project.
7. To develop a communication strategy for participative RBM Plannin in the near future.
8. To conclude the discussions for the purchase of a web-server for water information in line with data management strategy.