The Dnipro draft RBMPs (part 1) were presented via a webinar on 18 December 2020. The EUWI+ team presented results of the first chapters of the Dnipro RBMP: characterisation of the river basin including water bodies delineation, pressures and impact of human activities on water resources, identification of protected areas, environmental objectives, first part of the economic analysis for 2 sub-basins of the Dnipro, and the first attempt of a monitoring system including a new screening report of pollution of the Dnipro basin. The tasks were conducted in line with the European Water Framework Directive and with the Decree from the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 18 May 2017 on the preparation of River Basin Management Plans. The results of the consultation of the 4 Basin Councils concerning the Significant Water Management Issues have been presented, too. Specific materials were available for this first consultation (technical reports, presentations, infographics, questionnaires, and videos). The 70 participants in the webinar underlined the central role of the plan, notably a programme of measures addressing the significant issues identified in the basin which can bring tangible benefits for Ukrainian citizens.

Ukraine reviewed and officially submitted to UNECE and UNESCO its final national report under the Water Convention and SDG indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation.

Based on the experience gained durin the Dnipro RBMP development (part 2 is expected in 2024), the EUWI+ team prepared various guidance documents concerning risk assessment of surface water (improvement of a previous version, discussed with the State Agency of Water Resources of Ukraine on 18 November 2020), risk assessment of groundwater, protected areas (already discussed in 2019).

A first Investigative Monitoring survey took place in October 2020 in the form of a pollutant screening of the Dnipro River Basin. This was done by the Environmental Institute of Slovakia which provided a targeted analysis of metals in surface water and biota samples, wide-scope organo-chemical target screening (> 2,000 compounds) and a suspect screening (> 65,000 compounds according to the NORMAN suspect database) at 27 sites selected by SAWR across the basin. The draft results were presented on 18 December during an webinar with Deputy Minister Khoreev and Ukrainian experts.

Local TV channel 1+1 attended the sample collection at Desna river on 15 October, where the water intake for Kyiv city is located. The Laboratory team and the screening team with representatives from SAWR and EUWI+ were present and participated in a short interview. An announcement and infographics on the screening monitoring was posted.

Work with the national experts from the Municipal Development Institute (MDI) continued through the analysis of WSS information collected from water utilities. A draft report was prepared in English and Ukrainian languages and discussed through bilateral, virtual consultations with the key stakeholders, the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development and Associations of water utilities and municipalities, to agree on the assessment of the current status of Ukrainian WSS and identify existing problems and the factors causing them. As a next step, the analysis of potential development options for the reform of WSS services in Ukraine to enhance sustainability of the sector will be conducted and discussed at the national workshop to be organised in Q1 2021.

On 28 October EUWI+ experts held an on-line meeting with pupils called the “Youth Debates”: a German-Ukrainian project for the development of democracy through teaching young people to defend their own opinions. The meeting gathered more than 100 participants. For more than an hour, students learned what the Dnieper is “sick” of, what are the main problems of river pollution in Ukraine and how an innovative project on screening of pollutants in the Dnipro basin is being implemented. (https://youtu.be/BqN0Fnuq6dg).

The procurement of a range of equipment for biological surface water monitoring under the Water Framework Directive was contracted and delivered in Q4. Procurement of laboratory consumables and small laboratory equipment was coordinated with the CGO and the Vyshgorod laboratory. A Solid-phase Extraction system for the Vyshgorod laboratory was delivered in December.

Between October and December 2020, groundwater experts of the Ukrainian State Geological Research Institute developed a report titled “Transboundary sub parts of groundwater bodies in the Dnipro river basin of Ukraine” and submitted it to UBA for review.

The contracts for the purchase of groundwater sampling equipment were signed; the delivery is expected in January 2021.

In December 2020 a draft monitoring development plan for groundwater was prepared, translated into Ukrainian and submitted to the beneficiary for comments.

The Atomic Fluorescence Spectroscopy (AFS) was delivered to the Vyshgorod laboratory; its installation by the supplier had to be postponed into 2021 due to the pandemic (no international travels and face-to-face trainings in laboratories). As regards the so-called WFD methods training, the Environment Agency Austria prepared in December and translated into Russian a new training guidance document “AFS cook book” for the AFS equipment. This solution does not require the presence of international trainers and will be applied for the first time in early 2021 by the Vyshgorod laboratory, so that the analysis will be WFD-compliant.

Specialist lectures concerning the Dnipro draft RBMP by water experts were uploaded onto the EUWI+ YouTube channel: 1. Delineation of surface water bodies, 2. Monitoring of surface water bodies, 3. Protected areas, 4. Analysis of human pressures and their impact on surface water, risk assessment, 5. Analysis of human pressures and their impact on groundwater, risk assessment. Two training videos on biological monitoring of diatoms (phytobenthos/algae). They show the necessary steps to apply diatoms as a biological quality element for ecological status assessment of water bodies. The first video shows the sampling process in the field and the second explains the preparation of the analysis and permanent slides in the laboratory, meeting the European Standard (CEN 13946: 2014). The integration of phytothens as a second Biological Quality Element (BQE) in addition to macroinvertebrates is an important next step in improving surface water monitoring.

Taxonomic identification keys and literature were procured and disseminated to national experts. This is considered a sustainable investment into capacity building and quality assurance.

On 14 December 2020, a virtual meeting with the Vyshgorod laboratory representatives served to assess their preparedness for the forthcoming accreditation audit.

As part of the “EUWI+ expert stories” series, an interview of Ms Nataliiia Osadcha, Ukrainian expert for the Dnipro River Basin Management Plan, was published on EUWi+ Facebook and website and received more than 220 reaches.
Quarter 1 Look ahead

Priorities for Q1 2021 in Ukraine include the following:

- Finalisation of the reports concerning the economic analysis part 1 for the 4 Dnipro sub-basins and associated guidance document.
- Preparations for a technical workshop on potential development options for the reform of WSS services in Ukraine to enhance sustainability of the sector.
- Preparation and submission of a joint abstract together with the groundwater experts from Belarus for the participation at the General Assembly 2021 of the European Geosciences Union (EGU). The poster is about the transboundary coordinated delineation of transboundary sub-groundwater bodies together with Belarus.
- Delivery of the purchased groundwater sampling equipment.
- Preparation of a monitoring development plan for groundwater.
- Finalisation of SW Monitoring Development Plan.
- Finalisation of the report on the pollutants screening of the Dnipro RB. This will be annexed to the report on the related process of investigative monitoring that will be finalised by SAWR.
- The data management platform and its main tools will be transferred onto the virtual server within SAWR, as soon as the issue of the distant-access to this server is solved by SAWR.
- Discussions with stakeholders on the timing and format of the next NPD.
- Preparation of the pre-audit assessment report for Vyshorod laboratory.
- Online installation and training of the SPE equipment. Installation and training of the AFS equipment by the equipment supplier.
- Online meeting to clarify questions after using the new EUWI+ guidance document “AFS cook book” for the atomic fluorescence spectrometer (AFS) by the Vyshgorod laboratory.
- Order and delivery of laboratory consumables to the Vyshgorod laboratory and of small equipment to CGO and SE UGC.
- Preparations for the kick-off meeting on the SEA procedure for the draft national targets under the Protocol on Water and Health and their programme of measures in Ukraine will commence.