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UNECE : United Nations Convention of 1992

- IOWater - Our projects : news and update -

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OIEau

Management of data on transboundary water resources

(The News N° 17 - February 2010)

With more than 50% of their territory covered by transboundary basins, the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia strongly depend on shared water resources : it is thus of prime importance to develop effective policies in these basins for managing these resources while respecting natural water balances, more especially as regards climate change.

The implementation of these policies implies above all having a complete and detailed assessment of the water resources, based on homogeneous and consistent information. However, apart from some specific cases, access to the information necessary for water resources management remains often problematic in the region as in many other areas of the World.

In such a context, **the Secretariat of the "UN Convention on Protection and Use of Transboundary Rivers and International Lakes"**, which carries out water resources assessments in this area, IWAC (International Water Assessment Center) which is a resource center for the Secretariat) and IOWater drafted a project identification sheet which was validated on 3rd July 2009 by the Steering Committee of the "FFEM" (French Fund for Global Environment).

The actions proposed in this project aim at building the capacities for the identification of existing data and at developing the production and sharing of homogeneous and consistent information necessary for water resources management at the national and local level and for regional assessments. A pilot project could be implemented in 2010 in 2 pilot transboundary basins. It will include :

1. A component aiming at building the data administration and sharing capacities of the national and local Authorities involved in each of the 2 basins, by using methodologies that can be replicated in other transboundary basins of the region.
2. Regional actions aiming at using the results obtained in these 2 pilot basins and at disseminating the defined methodologies in the other transboundary basins and countries of the region. For each pilot basin, the project proposes :
 - I Characterization of the existing data sources with joint production of catalogues ;



- Development of "Water Data Master Plans" at basin level ;
- Recommendations on rules for sharing data among the competent authorities ;
- I Specification of the needs for strengthening the data producers and managers's abilities ;
- Capacity building for the production of synthetic information (maps, indicators) on priority topics.

For equitable access to water for all !

(The News N° 15 - December 2007)

Under the aegis of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO EURO), the French Ministry of Health, the Water Academy and IOwater organized a Seminar on Equitable Access to Water, in Paris on 5-6 July, within the Protocol on Water and Health, which came into effect in August 2005, and the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Rivers and International Lakes. This protocol aims to protect human health and well-being by improving water resources management and by preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases in Europe.

The discussions allowed evaluating the actions carried out in the countries of the European Union, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

However, the objectives are not yet achieved everywhere and sometimes the delay becomes alarming : the risk should be avoided of seeing a gap widening, even in Europe, between urban and rural areas, between rich city centers and marginalized suburbs, between those which have demanding Directives to apply, the required organization, competences and financial resources and the others which must be helped through common cause.

There will be true access for everyone to drinking water supply and sanitation only when there will be performing community services for ensuring investment, the operation, maintenance and renewal of installations, modern and effective management within a suited institutional framework and qualified and trained men at all levels.

Financial mechanisms are needed to ensure, lastingly, the recovery of all operation and investment costs, which would not be covered by subsidies.

As opposed to what is believed, water is very expensive for the poorest : access to community service is possible with equalization mechanisms ensuring common cause between the richest and poorest populations, with progressive pricing or specific social assistance systems.