

23. February 2004

Status note

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

The EU Water Initiative EECCA component

The EU Water Initiative EECCA component was launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg as a partnership initiative between EU and the EECCA countries. The aim of the initiative is to address key problems and challenges in the EECCA countries in particular related to 1) water supply and sanitation, including financing of water infrastructure and 2) Integrated Water Resources Management, including transboundary river basin management and regional seas issues. The partnership initiative links the global water agreements made at WSSD, with the Millennium Development Goals and the regional agreements made for the UNECE Region at the Kiev Conference in May 2003.

First High-level Meeting, Moscow

An important milestone in anchoring the Partnership within the EECCA region was the High Level Meeting in Moscow in March 2003, hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Russian Federation and financed by Denmark. More than 125 participants, primarily from the EECCA countries and including deputy ministers, participated in the meeting. Representatives of the various countries and organisations adopted a statement expressing their support and continued commitment to co-operation on water-related issues through the Partnership (documents from the First HLM can soon be accessed from the Partnership web site: www.euwi-eecca.org) The HLM gave a significant contribution to the list of building blocks under the initiative.

Kiev Conference May 2003

The EU water Initiative was presented at the ministerial meeting in the plenary sessions and in an official document to the 5th Ministerial Conference in Kiev 21-23 May under the Environment for Europe process. The Kiev conference welcomed the EECCA component and the programme document in the declaration, urged all countries to join the initiative and confirmed the strong linkage between the EECCA Environment Strategy and the EECCA component of the EUWI. Out of seven issues of the Environment Strategy, two relates to water and the EUWI-EECCA will support the implementation of the Strategy for these issues. The EECCA component will follow the monitoring and reporting procedures set up for the Strategy. At the Kiev Conference Denmark and Russia announced they would continue as lead countries of the EU Water Initiative EECCA component. (The Programme document can be accessed at from the Partnership web site: www.euwi-eecca.org).

Developments since Kiev Conference

The EU Water Initiative was presented and further discussed at the “Green Week” in Brussels in June 2003. As a result of this discussion the NGO profile of the initiative was strengthened through the development of an “NGO-package” which includes projects where NGO’s are involved in the implementation of activities of the Water Initiative.

Prioritisation of projects was discussed at a side-event during the Freshwater Conference in Dushanbee, Tadjikistan, September 2003. The conclusion was that it was up to the countries in a dialogue with potential donors to decide on the priorities and that a process of prioritisation should involve both the countries and the donors.

Financial analysis of cost in EECCA countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals and WSSD targets

Denmark has financed a study to analyse the costs and financing mechanisms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals on water supply and sanitation. The analysis is in the final stage and the result will be presented and discussed at the High Level Meeting of the EU Water Initiative EECCA Component in Moscow 26-27 February 2004.

Assessment of progress towards the WSSD IWRM 2005 target initiated.

An assessment on how far the EECCA countries have proceeded with Integrated Water Resources Management has been carried with support from Denmark. The analysis, based on questionnaires and replies from EECCA countries, will complement an analysis prepared by Global Water Partnership's regional network for Central Asia and the Caucasus. The result of both analyses will be reported and discussed at the High Level Meeting 26-27 February 2004 in Moscow.

Donor survey carried out

A survey on donor and IFI involvement and priorities for support to activities in the water sector in the EECCA countries has been carried by the EU Water Initiative Secretariat with support from Denmark. The result of the donor survey will be presented at the High Level Meeting 26-27 February.

EU Commission launched and contracted a study on support to the EU Water Initiative.

The EU Commission (Aidco) has launched a "Study on regional co-operation within the EECCA in the field of sustainable development of water resources". The regional component will focus on themes corresponding to the two pillars of the EU Water Initiative EECCA component, i.e. 'Water supply and sanitation, including investment in infrastructure' and 'Establishment and strengthening Integrated Water Resources Management in the EECCA by 2005'.

Under the TACIS programme for 2003 a budget of 3 million Euro has been set aside for carrying out preparatory activities (creating an Investment Support Facility) for the implementation of the 2004-2006 programming exercises. In the programme "2004-2006 Regional Strategy" 35 million Euro were allocated for the implementation of water related programmes in the EECCA. The result of the preparatory study will be used by the EU Commission in its prioritisation of the use of the funds.

Development of Building Blocks

The Initiative presently has approximately 270 building blocks (BB) registered in a database, ranging from small projects to large multi-million euro programmes. A few statistics on BB:

- 26% are ongoing, 20% planned (financing partly or wholly secured), 54% proposed (financing pending)
- 55% of BB on IWRM; 38% on WSS and 7% include both aspects of IWRM and WSS
- Unfinanced BB: IWRM = € 518 million; WSS = €275 million
- Reasonable geographical distribution: 31% in Russia, 15% in Central Asia, 13% in Caucasus, 19% in Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, 22% cross-cutting
- 26% of BB are regional (more than 2 countries involved); 21 transboundary (2 countries), 53% national

Since Kiev all proponents of building blocks have been contacted by the EUWI Secretariat in order to 1) assess if the building block is still a priority 2) update information including providing additional information if available. On the basis of the information available, the EUWI-EECCA Secretariat has prepared targeted packages of extracts from the database and approached selected donors for possible support to further development of potentially interesting building blocks.

The second High Level Meeting

The Partnership has now – since the successful presentation at the 5th Pan-European Environmental Ministerial Conference in Kiev in May 2003 – entered the implementation phase and needs the continued (and strengthened) cooperation and contribution from its partners. Therefore, the Danish and Russian Governments have organised a second regional High Level Meeting in the EECCA region to discuss important issues for the Partnership.

Two aspects are indispensable in further developing the Partnership:

- Ensuring financial resources and mechanisms for the EUWI-EECCA
- Concrete implementation of the building blocks proposed under the Partnership, as discussed in Kiev

Since the EUWI is focussing on the implementation of the WSSD Plan of Implementation approved in Johannesburg, another issue that is important to consider at the High Level Meeting is the status for preparation of national IWRM and water efficiency plans. According to the Plan of Implementation such plans should be prepared by all countries by 2005. The 12th CSD session in 2004 will have its focus on water, sanitation and human settlements and be a natural stock-taking opportunity for the international community on the road towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), of which the 2005 plans are an important step.

Web-site launch

Very recently a web-site for the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development has been established by the Secretariat (address: www.euwi-eecca.org). The site contains general information on the EECCA component of the EU Water Initiative and also provides access to the collection of Building Blocks and related documents, links to relevant partners, news, etc.