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<http://www.oieau.eu/iowater/our-projects-news-and-update/article/early-stages-of-the-pilot-project>

# Early stages of the pilot project to strengthen data administration in two pilot Transboundary Basins

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## **Early stages of the pilot project to strengthen data administration in two pilot Transboundary Basins**

In the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, the challenges related to transboundary water management are particularly critical for future development.

The implementation of effective policies to manage water resources while respecting natural balance requires above all that the decision makers, involved at regional, national, and local levels, have the information available to meet their needs and validated with the partners, on water resources assessment and present and future water needs / demands.

In 2010, the French Global Environment Fund (FFEM) provided the funding of € 800,000 for jointly financing a € 2,252,000 project to build data administration capacity and enhancement at transboundary basin level in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. It was carried out with the support of the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development (MEDDTL) and of the International Office for Water (IOWater).

This project, developed as part of activities related to "the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes", whose secretariat is hosted by UNECE, aimed primarily at strengthening, in 2 transboundary pilot basins, the capabilities of shared data and information management between the various partners by using methodologies that can be also applied to other transboundary basins.

Administered by IWAC (International Water Assessment Center) and technically coordinated by IOWater, this project began activities in December 2010 :

- \* In the Dniester River Basin shared by the Ukraine and Moldova, in cooperation with the national authorities and the Dniester III project.
- \* In the Aral Sea Basin (Amu Darya and Syr Darya River Basins) shared by the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan) and Afghanistan, again in collaboration with the national authorities through IFAS Executive Committee, an international organization recognized by the five Central Asian countries to develop integrated water resources management in the Aral Sea Basin.

After a phase of objective validation with the partners, the diagnostic phase is terminated. It has already enabled to :

- \* develop a database of data producers, managers and users which can be consulted online and organize, in 5 of the 7 countries concerned, workshops gathering the main data producers, to launch, with their direct collaboration, an inventory of data sources existing at national level (available online in Russian and English) and draw data flow diagrams describing the exchange of existing data on the main topics of water resources management (surface water quantity and quality, rainfall, groundwater, uses, socioeconomic, environmental and geographical data)
- \* launch an online survey that allows partners, data producers, managers and users, presenting their needs in terms of information, management tools, services and training related to data administration.

Based on the obtained results, an action plan will shortly be presented to the partners of each basin in order to define with them the priority actions that will be developed in 2012 for the final phase of the project.

The results of this work are already available on the dedicated Website and were presented in several side events during the last UNECE Environment Ministers' Conference held in Astana in September 2011.

This project was presented at the World Water Forum which took place in Marseilles in March 2012.