



This action is funded by the European Union

**ANNEX II**

of the Commission Decision on the European Neighbourhood Instrument Action Programme  
2015

**Action Document for implementation of the European Union Water Initiative Plus for the  
Eastern Partnership (EUWI+ 4 EaP)**

**INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS**

**WORK PROGRAMME FOR GRANTS**

This document constitutes the work programme for grants in the sense of Article 128(1) of the Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012) in sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 concerning grants awarded directly without a call for proposals.

<b>1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number</b>	<b>European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+ 4 EaP)</b> CRIS number: ENI/2015/038-109 + ENI/2016/038-300 Financed under European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)
<b>2. Zone benefiting from the action/location</b>	Eastern Partnership Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine
<b>3. Programming document</b>	Multiannual Regional Indicative Programme 2014-2017 for the Neighbourhood East
<b>4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area</b>	Management of water resources, environmental governance
<b>5. Amounts concerned</b>	Total estimated cost: EUR 24.8 million Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 23.5 million: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- EUR 10.0 million from the general budget of the European Union for 2015; and</li><li>- EUR 13.5 million from the general budget of the European Union for 2016, subject to the availability of appropriations following the adoption of the relevant budget</li></ul>

	This action is co-financed by potential grant beneficiaries for an indicative amount of EUR 1.3 million			
<b>6. Aid modalities and implementation modalities</b>	Project Modality  Grants – direct award			
<b>7. DAC code(s)</b>	14010 - Water sector policy and administrative management			
<b>8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
	Biological diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagship</b>	Not relevant		

## SUMMARY

The project builds on the results and lessons learnt of regional projects led by the European Union (EU) in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries in the field of water, in particular: i) the Support to the EU Water Initiative (EUWI) in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (2012-2016, EUR 3.2 million) and ii) the Environmental Protection of International River Basins (EPIRB) (2012-2016, EUR 7.5 million).

The action European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+ 4 EaP) addresses existing challenges in both development and implementation of efficient management of water resources. It specifically supports the EaP countries to move towards the approximation to EU acquis in the field of water management with a focus on trans-boundary river basins management as identified by the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). By the end of the project, the following three results will be achieved:

- Result 1: legal and regulatory framework improved in line with the WFD, Integrated Water Resources Management and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

- Result 2: River Basins Management Plans designed and implemented in line with the WFD principles.
- Result 3: Lessons learnt are regularly collected, shared and communicated to stakeholders

## 1. CONTEXT

### Regional context

Water is a key resource for the sustainable economic and social development of Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. Freshwater resources are used by industries, agriculture, households among others. However, growing pressure on water resources in EaP is affecting the availability of water and its quality. The majority of the water resources in the EaP are of the trans-boundary nature i.e. river Dnieper shared by Belarus and Ukraine and often cause tensions between bordering countries. Therefore an appropriate management of water resources at regional level is strongly needed.

Since the past few years countries of the EaP countries have demonstrated their willingness to improve their approaches towards water resource management along the lines of the European Union (EU) Water Framework Directive (WFD)<sup>1</sup> and other relevant water-related directives, the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)<sup>2</sup>, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE Water Convention)<sup>3</sup> and the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context (Espoo Convention)<sup>4</sup>.

Progress has been made in a number of areas, specifically through dedicated support of EU regional projects, notably: the Support to the EU Water Initiative in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (2012-2016, EUR 3.2 million); the Environmental Protection of International River Basins (2012-2016, EUR 7.5 million) and the project Improving Environmental Monitoring of the Black Sea (2013-2017, EUR 3.78 million). Ratification of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements mentioned in the previous paragraph has progressed (see Annex I: Table 2) and negotiations with countries that have not yet signed the UNECE Water Convention are ongoing. Implementation cooperation on trans-boundary river management is now being established at least at pilot basin level between some of the countries along the lines of the EU WFD. Under the EPIRB project, specific support is provided for the implementation of countries' obligations on the EU WFD and the Danube Convention.

Nonetheless, the countries still face important challenges on policy and implementation of efficient water resources management. Water quality and quantity problems exist, the latter mainly in the form of water supply for domestic, industrial and agricultural use. Water quality is largely affected by direct discharges of untreated municipal and industrial waste waters and other pollutants. Pesticides and fertilisers used in agriculture, mining, oil production, transport and food industry are other key sectors affecting water quality and their negative effects are worsened by emissions from landfills and illegal dumpsites. These results in rapidly deteriorating water

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy", available on: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02000L0060-20140101>

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32008L0056>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/wat/ECE\\_MP.WAT\\_41.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/wat/ECE_MP.WAT_41.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unece.org/env/eia/eia.html>

resources, with considerable consequences for ecosystems, economic development and human health.

Regarding water quantity, access rates to water services and sanitation are high throughout the region, especially in urban areas. However, distribution networks are generally deteriorating with declining water quality and significant grid leakages as a result. These factors are supplemented by unregulated water use and increasing water demand for domestic and industrial use, agricultural production and energy generation. Existing infrastructure for waste water collection and treatment in the region need to be upgraded and their capacity expanded. Allocation principles should be further developed and incentives for water use efficiency identified and implemented, using a mix of policy instruments.

Other challenges include natural and man-made disasters (floods, heat and cold waves, earthquakes, forest fires, industrial catastrophes...) which may lead to loss of lives, displacement of populations, destructions of costly infrastructures and negative impacts on the economic growth and potential for sustainable development of the countries affected. Climatic variability and change further enhances the water stress.

When trans-boundary river basins or lakes are concerned, activities in the upstream countries affect both quantity and quality of the water available for the downstream ones. In the EaP region the only international convention for the management of specific trans-boundary river basins is the Convention on the Danube River. As a consequence, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is the only international river basin authority in the East.

### ***EU Policy Framework***

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) provides a framework for closer relations between the EU and its neighbouring countries. The ENP is further developed through the Eastern Partnership, a joint initiative between the EU and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Launched in 2009, the EaP builds on the ENP and aims to improve the political and economic trade relations between the EU and its partners.

The ENP Action Plans set out an agenda of jointly agreed priorities for action and represent a central element of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The Action Plan contain actions to enhance environmental governance, address issue-specific environmental concerns, and at the same time help promote international, regional and cross-border cooperation on environmental issues. Concerning water management, the requirements of the WFD and other water-related directives<sup>5</sup> as well as the MSFD are the reference pieces of legislation of the environmental parts. While approximation to the WFD is promoted across the region under the EaP umbrella, work on the MSFD mainly takes place in the framework of the Black Sea Synergy.

The Partnership also provides the foundations for new Association Agreements (AAs), including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs), for those countries willing and ready to take on the far-reaching commitments with the EU that these entail. In 2014, Georgia, Moldova

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<sup>5</sup> Such as the Urban Waste Water Directive, the Drinking Water Directive, the Bathing Water Directive, Groundwater Directive, the Nitrates Directive or the Flood Risk Management Directive.

and Ukraine ratified the AA, a set of commitments and priorities developed to guide the countries towards the approximation of EU legislation, including those related to management of water resources (i.e. Chapter 3 of the AA of Georgia).

The EU environmental legislation is also consistent with a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements to which the EU is a Party, the main ones being the UNECE Water Convention and the Espoo Convention. Additionally, work on trans-boundary river basin cooperation has gained importance following recent developments in the way the EU intends to address water issues. With the adoption of the Council Conclusions on Water Diplomacy in July 2013 the EU has reaffirmed its commitment to address the root-causes of water challenges around the world, particularly by supporting regional cooperation and promoting river-basin approaches both in national and trans-boundary waters.

### ***Stakeholder analysis***

Key stakeholders in the management of water resources include a variety of actors. Specifically, the action targets Ministries of Environment and their specialised water units, departments and laboratories, national water agencies and Water Committees, river basin authorities, bodies dealing with monitoring and water resources management, hydro-meteorological and monitoring services and environmental protection agencies.

Other line ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Regional Planning, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Health are also key actors in particular regarding policy coordination and mainstreaming of environmental policies in development plans and budgetary frameworks.

The EU WFD requires all stakeholders to be involved in the preparation, review and update of river basin management plans and programmes of measures. Citizens are the end-beneficiaries, while civil society organisations and NGOs are the stakeholders of water-related projects. Their inclusion in the water policy reform process has been progressively promoted over the past few years. Another group of key stakeholders is represented by water users, especially those operating in the agricultural and industrial sectors as well as urban/domestic users.

Regular involvement of academia, regional and international organisations is important to guide an informed and coherent decision making on development and implementation of policy reforms.

### ***Priority areas for support/problem analysis***

Based on the progress made so far and current challenges, key priority areas for EU regional support are the following:

1. Assistance on policy development and implementation of water management in line with EU framework directives with a focus on trans-boundary issues.

Achievements in this area have been made through the progressive convergence towards the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the WFD, however key challenges still exist. While regulatory documents (Water Codes and their annexes, technical guidelines etc.) have been and are being produced in most of the countries with the support of the EUWI and EPIRB projects, they are slowly starting to directly or indirectly influence national legislation and practice. Water sector policies need further improvements to be in line to the

WFD and, in particular, this is a key challenge of the AA countries which have now clear commitments and a timetable to follow for the approximation of the EU acquis.

The National Policy Dialogues (NPDs), held within the EUWI project, helped creating platforms of discussions for key stakeholders and donors and provided robust analytical work and opportunities for exchange of good practices enhancing, inter alia, inter-institutional work among Ministries. However, involvement of all stakeholders needs to be further strengthened and in Belarus and Ukraine the NPDs should be activated in 2015.

In all the EaP countries, there is still a need to further advance the policy reforms and foster the development and use of economic instruments for water management in line with the EU WFD. Often there is a lack of skilled human resources in the region to work on policy development in line with the EU WFD. Specific weaknesses are related to human resources working within national agencies and in local river basins entities.

2. Support on the implementation of RBMPs, with a focus on trans-boundary issues, in line with EU WFD and related requirements.

Through the pilot projects, EUWI and EPIRB helped to set up and improve the implementation of the EU WFD. Despite key achievements on the development of seven RBMPs, IWRM still differs from country to country notwithstanding they inherited the same water management structures from the Soviet Union. Some of the main challenges are:

- a) Not all EaP countries have set up appropriate bodies in charge of surface water monitoring/regulation;
- b) biological quality components are not included in freshwaters monitoring programmes in all countries; hydro-morphological parameters are not included into monitoring programmes in any of the countries; monitoring of groundwater is either not conducted or it is treated separately from surface waters; the quality and adequacy of monitoring data needs improvement in most of the countries;
- c) national classifications of chemical and ecological status of surface water bodies based on the WFD 5-classes approach need to be introduced or upgraded in most of the countries;
- d) poor infrastructures and/or deteriorated monitoring networks after the collapse of the Soviet Union;
- e) Only few laboratories have achieved accreditation so far;
- f) Lack of proper integration of the various elements for the development and implementation of the RBMP and programme of measures, such as assessment of pressures, economic elements, inter-calibration, consultation mechanisms, integration of ecosystems needs and nature conservation, integration of all water legislation requirements, etc.

Therefore, key priorities of support in this area include i) the strengthening of human capacities and building skilled human resources on monitoring water quality and quantity in line with EU WFD, ii) addressing infrastructures needs for selected areas, and (iii) support the implementation of the RBMPs developed within the EPIRB project.

One issue related to both first and second key priorities is public participation. Public participation is one of the key pillars of the EU WFD. Consultation with public and key stakeholders is needed to identify the problems, the solutions and their costs, to be included in river basin management plans (RBMPs). In the EaP region the first steps towards more regular public consultation in the elaboration of RBMPs and water resource use in general have been undertaken in recent years. EU-funded projects provided significant assistance in this respect, especially by facilitating stakeholders' consultations and by involving civil society organisations in project implementation. However, work needs to be done yet to strengthen the technical and mobilisation capabilities of such organisations and better involving water users in the development and implementation of RBMPs. Consultation during the legislation/policy development should not be forgotten as this is also a requirement stemming from the Aarhus Convention. In addition to that, it is important to capitalise on lessons learnt from pilot projects and exchanges among countries to learn on best practices should be supported.

## 2. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
Unstable political situation in the countries - lack of political will to collaborate on trans-boundary issues, change in government priorities	M	Building on the positive experience of past projects, the EU will continue a regular policy dialogue with governments to facilitate collaboration on trans-boundary water issues. This will help to maintain continuity with achievements made so far and strengthen trust between the Governments, the EU and implementing partners. The Association Agreement (AA) roadmaps signed by Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova represent an additional key framework for EU-AA countries closer collaboration. In line with the EU Directives, these agreements indicate the key priority areas for approximation, including cooperation on trans-boundary water resources. The projects will continue to support inter-countries Working Group on water management.
Environmental protection is not a political priority	L/M	Through the ratification of the AA, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine committed to approximate their legislation, including the environmental chapters to the EU <i>aquis</i> . This shows increasing political commitment to align to EU directives including those related to environment. In Belarus, environment has been identified as a priority area of support and the EPIRB result-oriented monitoring (ROM) report 2013 indicated that ownership of environmental projects by national stakeholders is quite high. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the



		EU will strengthen political dialogue to ensure that activities are framed within the national political agenda. The regional approach will be instrumental to address issues of concerns among countries related to the trans-boundary nature of water resources in the region. The projects will thus contribute to inform decision makers and raise awareness on environmental protection at all stages of implementation, maintaining a political dialogue with the Government and stakeholders.
Change/lack of human resources	M	The projects will work with a wide number of experts and provide training of trainers in order to create additional skilled human resources.
<b>Assumptions</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The EaP countries are committed to continue working with the ENP Action Plans which includes promotion of international, regional and cross-border cooperation in the environmental field. Although Belarus doesn't have an ENP Action Plan, the Government identified Environment as a key priority for EU support. In addition to that, specific commitments are made by Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova with the ratification of the AAs.</li> <li>2. The EaP countries are allocating necessary resources for the development and implementation of policy reforms and to support/scale up pilot projects.</li> </ol>		

### 3. LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

#### 3.1. Lessons learnt

The document "2014-2020 orientations for European Union Regional support in the field of water management in the Eastern Partnership ", the Result Oriented Monitoring 2013 reports (ROM ID: C-279666) on EPIRB and the study in 2014 "Global Assessment+ of EU support provided in the region in the fields of environmental governance and green economy, water management and climate change in the Eastern Partnership countries<sup>6</sup> (2007- 2013)" provide fundamental lessons learnt from EPIRB and EUWI projects that constitute the basis for this Action. The key lessons outlined by these documents are summarised below:

- Support on water is highly relevant to the needs of the countries, additional technical assistance is needed to address legal and institutional weaknesses to ensure approximation to EU acquis. Experiences from EU Member States on river basins management, i.e. Danube or Rhine rivers, would benefit the EaP countries for moving forward the approximation process.
- Project ownership and usefulness of the projects were based on the combined content: producing technical, legal and institutional documents, executing training and field surveys. However capacity building trainings should be further demand-driven, involving

<sup>6</sup> This study has been finalised in January 2015.

more local stakeholders and setting a clear timetable of trainings in each country and at regional level. Trainings of trainers will be beneficial to develop skilled technicians in the region.

- Pilot projects fulfilled conditions of testing legal and institutional documents and provided training and field surveys options.
- Partner countries are interested in learning of the new approaches and methodologies regarding the WFD and related directives.
- Partner countries are hampered by lack of adequate budgets for operations and maintenance, water infrastructure deteriorated, high water losses, permitting procedures not adequate.
- Joint field surveys have showed a positive result of strengthening trans-boundary cooperation. Further support will be beneficial for increasing regional cooperation in the region.
- EPIRB and EUWI projects would benefit of more close linkages to ensure effective policy development and implementation at river basins level.

### **3.2. Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination**

The implementation of the WFD provides good opportunities to strengthen coordination among donors in the field of water management and identify synergies and complementarities. Under Result 1, the National Policy Dialogue will specifically address coordination among donors, including Member States Agencies and with the Government.

The European Commission will ensure that the EU projects in the region are coordinated, notably the project Shared Information Environmental Information System (SEIS East) and the project Improving Environmental Monitoring of the Black Sea. In addition, the Commission will ensure coordination with investments related to environment and water supported by the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF). The regular review of the NIF financing plan will ensure timely and consistent interventions by the NIF in the water management sector. Coordination will be also set up with relevant units of the Joint Research Institute which is leading research projects in the area of environment and water in the EaP countries.

The Programme for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters for EaP countries (PPRD East) will focus on the approximation to the EU Directive on floods. Close coordination will be ensured with this Action in order to avoid possible overlapping and ensure synergies among the projects.

A programme of support to regional dialogues on the water-energy-food security nexus and the establishment of action plans is being prepared under Global Public Goods and Challenges thematic envelope led by the Directorate General for International Development and Cooperation. Synergies will be established in order to integrate the Eastern Partnership region in the overall coordination of nexus dialogues.

Funds from the EU Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) could be mobilised for short term technical assistance missions on country-specific issues. A joint assessment of countries' requests is regularly done by Commission line Directorates to ensure consistency and avoid duplication of interventions. Twinning could be selectively used to meet specific technical

demands by partner countries. Finally, coordination with bilateral support programmes managed by EU Delegations will be ensured through close collaboration with EU delegations.

### **3.3. Cross-cutting issues**

According to the International Panel on Climate Change, climate change will have a profound influence on the availability and seasonal variability of water resources. Climate change issues will be taken into account in the implementation of the activities, specifically regarding ensuring mainstreaming of climate change issues in policy development and implementation. In addition, other sectors may impact or be impacted by water resources, such as agriculture, biodiversity and energy. Activities will consider to address the nexus with energy and agriculture as well as issues regarding protection of biodiversity as requested by the WFD.

Good governance is a key objective of the Action and it is addressed in both results by strengthening capacities for policy development, monitoring and implementation. Whenever possible and feasible, efforts will be made to promote women's participation in the implementation of the activities through their involvement at project level. Specifically, elaboration of river basins management plans may include a gender analysis and propose option to mainstream gender.

## **4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

### **4.1. Objectives/results**

The objective of the action is to improve the management of water resources, in particular of trans-boundary rivers, in the Eastern Partnership countries.

The specific objective is to achieve convergence of national policies and strategies with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) as well as the implementation of selected measures.

The results of the action are:

- Result 1: Legal and regulatory framework improved in line with the WFD, IWRM and MEAs.
- Result 2: River Basins Management Plans designed and implemented in line with the WFD principles.
- Result 3: Lessons learnt are regularly collected, shared and communicated to stakeholders.

## 4.2. Main activities

Outputs and key activities under each result are presented below. Priorities of action will be identified based on specific countries' needs, and, specifically for the Association Agreement (AA) countries, activities will be aligned and consistent to the AA Roadmap.

### **Result 1: Legal and regulatory framework improved in line with the WFD, IWRM and MEAs**

This result specifically builds on the achievement to date and lessons learnt of the EUWI project which will finish beginning of 2016. It focuses on improving legislative and governance framework on water management as per requirements of the EU WFD, IWRM and MEAs. Output 1.1 is dedicated to strengthening coordination mechanisms within the governments and donors and between these and stakeholders to move forward the approximation to the EU *acquis*. Under Output 1.2, the focus is on enhancing capacities at local, national and regional level for the development of policies and strategies.

#### Output 1.1: National and regional coordination mechanisms in place to support planning, approval and implementation of legal and regulatory framework in line with the WFD, IWRM and MEAs.

This output builds on the experience of the National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) supported under EUWI (2012-2016). The NPDs provides platform for dialogue among key stakeholders to advance water policy. The NPDs will be mainly composed by: key ministerial bodies of various sectors i.e. environment, energy, transport and agriculture; local bodies in charge of river basins management; civil society organisations, academia and citizens; private sector; donors. Regular interministerial/inter-sectoral/multi-stakeholder coordination among key stakeholders will contribute to raise awareness and support the process of mainstreaming environmental issues in development plans, policies and budgetary framework. The NPDs will serve as platforms for:

- coordination among national authorities
- steering the legislative reforms and the implementation of policies, strategies and legislation with specific support on approximation to *EU acquis*.
- inclusion and engagement of civil society in the process of policy development
- contribution to regional coordination with the aim of developing and strengthening of cooperation on trans-boundary rivers.
- mechanisms for establishing closer coordination between the government and donors. In this way, the NPDs will contribute to effective division of labour and allocation of international resources.

Under this result, analytical work will be prepared to support policy reforms and river basin organisations on the implementation on river basins management plans. Based on the discussions held during the NPDs, a set of priorities will be identified and supported by targeted capacity building activities led under output 1.2.

#### Key Activities:

- Organisation of regular National Policy Dialogues (at least one per year), based on countries' needs.

- Preparation of analytical work to support policy reforms and implementation of river basins management plans.
- Review of progress and collection of lessons learnt on legal and regulatory reforms.

Output 1.2: Technical capacity is built within national and/or river basins authorities for the development of policies, strategies and budgetary framework in line with WFD, IWRM and MEAs.

In accordance with the WFD, training activities will contribute to the development and strengthening of national capacities in the areas of water policy, economic analysis of water use and protected areas. When relevant, complementary support could be provided by TAIEX or twinning mechanisms to further link and promote exchange of experiences with Member States. Target beneficiaries of these trainings are civil servants in charge of the development of policies, strategies and budgetary frameworks. Capacity building and technical support will be provided at national, subnational and international river basin level.

Key Activities:

- Completion and update of the gap analysis at national and regional level on the existing legal and regulatory framework in relation to WFD, IWRM and MEAs. This will include support for the harmonisation of relevant legal and normative acts to the requirement of the WFD.
- Preparation of country and regional training plan based on completion and update of the analysis of training needs at national and regional level.
- Organisation of specialised trainings, coaching and trainings of trainers on WFD, IWRM and MEAs according to training needs analysis and country and regional training plan.
- Ad-hoc technical support for drafting and reviewing policies and strategies in accordance to WFD, IWRM and MEAs, including ensuring public participation.

## **Result 2: River Basins Management Plans implemented in line with the EU WFD principles**

This result specifically builds on the achievements to date and lessons learnt of the EPIRB project which will end beginning of 2016. It aims at addressing needs on the implementation of policies, law and regulations on water management. Under Output 2.1, this result contributes at ensuring that adequate infrastructures and material for laboratories are in place to allow the effective implementation of the river basin management plans (RBMPs) in selected areas. Under Output 2.2, the result contributes to ensuring that adequate human capacities are in place to allow the effective monitoring the achievement of good ecological status. Within Output 2.3, the result focuses on the follow up of the seven RBMPs developed within the EPIRB project with the objective of contributing to their implementation. Options to develop new river basins management plans will also be considered.

Output 2.1: Adequate infrastructure is available for sound monitoring of water quality and quantity in pilot areas in line with the WFD

This output focuses on setting the key conditions for the implementation of RBMPs in accordance to the WFD. These include the purchase of strategic assets i.e. hydrological and monitoring stations for surface and groundwater quality monitoring, fixed and mobile biological and chemical analytical equipment, material for laboratories and their support for achieving

official accreditation to international practices. These activities will be focused on 6-7 pilot areas following up the EPIRB project.

Key Activities:

- Assessment of equipment needs for monitoring quality and quantity of water in designed areas.
- Purchase of equipment, including hydrological and water quality monitoring stations.
- Rehabilitation and upgrade of existing equipment.
- Rehabilitation and upgrade of existing laboratories.
- Technical support to laboratories for accreditation.

Output 2.2: Capacity is developed and strengthened on chemical, hydro-morphological, ecological and biological monitoring of selected river basins in accordance to WFD

This output addresses capacity building needs of the countries and at regional level for trans-boundary water management. Capacity building activities will contribute to the implementation of RBMPs, scale-up and replication of pilot projects. Activities will focus on technical and methodological support including definition of water bodies, inter-calibration, biological monitoring, identification of macro-invertebrates and macro-phytes, ecological monitoring and coastal monitoring. When relevant, support will be also dedicated to improve skills on project management. The country and regional plans will ensure appropriate sequencing of workshops.

Key Activities:

- Review and update of training needs at national and regional level.
- Preparation of country and regional training plans.
- Organisation of hands-on trainings and training of trainers.
- Organisation of joint field surveys in trans-boundary rivers – in coordination with output 2.3.

Output 2.3: Pilot river basins management plans implemented

Building on the activities completed by the EPIRB project in pilot sites, this output will focus on the completion, implementation and monitoring of RBMPs in selected areas. Notably, it will address the needs at river basin, local, country and regional level related to the effective management of river basins. This includes activities related to monitoring of water quality and quantity, joint surveys to assess trans-boundary water bodies and strengthening data quality and data management as well as all other elements required for the implementation of RBMPs. Coordination with EU SEIS East project will be ensured specifically under this output. The EU experience in testing pilot river basins could be used for lessons learned i.e. the experience of the Danube and Rheine.

Key Activities:

- Completion and updating needs under each pilot project.
- Organisation of joint field surveys in trans-boundary rivers.
- Carry out biological, ecological, chemicals surveys as needed to develop and implement the RBMPs, including intercalibration exercise.
- Development and strengthening of national databases on water related issues.

- Ensure compliance of data with SEIS East principles for collection and sharing of data.
- Testing the implementation of economic instruments for efficient water management.
- Investigatory monitoring of water bodies at risk of high pollution or related issues.
- Support the river basins management institutions in the implementation of the RBMPs, including analysis of pressures, integration of all water bodies (surface, groundwater and transitional waters), heavily modified water bodies, application of exemptions, integration of requirements under other legislative frameworks (nitrates-agriculture, plant protection products legislation, nature conservation, integrated permitting, hazardous chemicals and waste management), international cooperation.
- Establish a system for regular monitoring of the implementation of the RBMPs plans of action.
- Support the use of evidence-based data for policy making and review of RBMPs plans of action.
- Support public and stakeholder participation in the preparation, implementation, review and update of RBMPs.

### **Result 3: Lessons learnt collected, shared and communicated to stakeholders**

This result focuses on the communication of key results and involvement of public in the projects activities in order to raise awareness about the efficient water management and the work achieved within the project. This result aims at sharing experiences among stakeholders for possible scaling-up of pilot activities.

#### Output 3.1: Coordination, awareness and visibility of the project are ensured.

Under this output, it is expected that tailored communication activities are developed to communicate to a variety of stakeholders the lessons learnt of result 1 and result 2. A specific focus will be on further linking policy development and implementation. Therefore, coordination and communication between results 1 and 2 is ensured through result 3. To increase visibility of the action, discussions on activities and results will be held also within the EaP Platform 2 on Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies, dedicated panels (e.g., Panel on Environment and Climate Change) and appropriate national or international fora.

#### Key Activities:

- Development, regular update and implementation of a communication strategy covering both result 1 and result 2. The Strategy may include: implementation of communication activities for targeted stakeholders, including communication campaigns, TV reports, school information sessions etc.
- Organisation of exchanges among stakeholders of pilot projects developed under result 2.
- Establishment of a mechanism for sharing information and communication between result 1 and result 2.
- Organisation of events to discuss/exchange practices developed under result 1 and result 2 with stakeholders.

### **4.3. Intervention logic**

Based on the lessons learnt highlighted in section 2.1, result 1 will serve for addressing key gaps in the legislative and regulation framework, whereas result 2 will concentrate on improving the implementation of legislations and policies on water management with a specific focus on trans-boundary issues. Result 3 will ensure appropriate linkages between the first two results and will focus on communication and sharing experiences for possible scale-up of pilot projects.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **5.1. Financing agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries.

### **5.2. Indicative implementation period**

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of the adoption by the Commission of this Action Document.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorising officer responsible by amending this decision and the relevant contracts and agreements; such amendments to this decision constitute technical amendments in the sense of point (i) of Article 2(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.

### **5.3. Implementation modalities**

#### **5.3.1 Grant: direct award for the implementation of result 1 (direct management)**

(a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The grant implementation modality will be used for implementing result 1 as described in sections 4.1 and 4.2 above. This grant will support the implementation of EUWI+ specifically on the strengthening of the legal and regulatory framework in line with the WFD, IWRM and MEA with a view to achieving the following outputs:

- Output 1.1: National and regional coordination mechanisms in place to support planning, approval and implementation of legal and regulatory framework in line with the WFD, IWRM and MEAs.
- Output 1.2: Technical capacity is built within national and/or river basins authorities for the development of policies, strategies and budgetary framework in line with WFD, IWRM and MEAs.

(b) Justification of a direct grant



Article 190(1) (f) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 authorises that grants be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals. On this basis and under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to an international organisation having relevant specific experience and capacities in the fields of intervention. For the reasons detailed below, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have been identified as the most suitable entities. The grant will be awarded to either one of the two organisations or to both acting in partnership, depending on the outcome of the grant contract preparation phase.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because UNECE has a specific mandate on the Water Convention and has supported the countries in the regions since many years with successful results. The OECD is specialised on providing policy advice on economic instruments for efficient water pricing and has already provided support in this region in this area of work. Both organisations are implementing partners under the EUWI project and have successfully assisted in reforming water policies in the countries. Through their work, these organisations have developed a specific wealth of experience and knowledge as well as a very extensive network of contacts at the political and technical levels to pursue the policy reforms in the water sector that form the core objective of this component of the action. Furthermore, both the OECD and UNECE have established strong relationships with governments and key stakeholders in each country in the proposed fields of intervention. This provides these organisations with a unique capacity of acting at the highest level, which has been identified as a key factor for steering the reform of the partner countries legal and regulatory frameworks towards EU standards and norms (WFD, IWRM and MEAs).

(c) Eligibility conditions

Not applicable.

(d) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant. The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the action; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(e) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is 95%.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

4<sup>th</sup> trimester of 2015.

### **5.3.2 Grant: direct award for the implementation of result 2 and result 3 (direct management)**

(a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The grant implementation modality will be used for implementing result 2 and result 3 as described in sections 4.1 and 4.2 above. This grant will support the implementation of EUWI+ on the improvement of the management of rivers according to RBMPs principles of the WFD and on the dissemination of lessons learnt and exchange of experiences, with a view to achieving the following outputs:

Result 2:

- Output 2.1: Adequate infrastructure is available for sound monitoring of water quality and quantity in pilot areas in line with the WFD
- Output 2.2: Capacity is developed and strengthened on chemical, hydro-morphological, ecological and biological monitoring of selected river basins in accordance to WFD
- Output 2.3: Pilot River Basins Management Plans implemented

Result 3:

- Output 3.1: Targeted communication activities implemented

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to EU Member States public entities specialised on management of water resources. Identification and selection of the entity(ies) having the required qualifications, capacity and experience for implementing the planned activities will be done through a consultation of Member States administrations.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because the EU Member States public entities specialised in the management of water resources have a specific and unique knowledge of EU acquis in the field of water management. Thanks to their experience as public bodies entrusted with the implementation and enforcement of the relevant legal framework, these entities are the most appropriate to accompany the EaP countries in implementing the river basins management approach in line with the EU WFD. These entities will also be able to share their experiences and lessons learnt in the implementation of EU directives.

(c) Eligibility conditions

Not applicable.

(d) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant.  
The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the action; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(e) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is 95 %.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

Third trimester of 2016.

#### **5.4. Alternative implementation modalities for results 2 and 3**

For the reasons explained in section 5.3.2, awarding a direct grant under direct management to EU Member States public entities specialised in management of water resources has been identified as the most suitable for implementing results 2 and 3.

It is however sensible to consider an alternative implementation approach should it reveal not possible to conclude the planned grant contract due to certain factors that cannot be mitigated at this stage. In particular the following risks have been identified:

- No EU Member States specialised entities show an interest in implementing the activities;
- The EU Member States specialised entities that express an interest do not have the necessary and/or appropriate qualifications, capacity and experience;
- Capable EU Member States specialised entities show an interest but do not have the legal mandate or the adequate/sufficient financial and/or human resources;
- The timeframe for concluding the grant agreement reveals insufficient for allowing capable EU Member States specialised entities to reserve or allocate the necessary national budgetary resources due to public budget planning constraints.

In such case, the following implementation approach will be followed.

##### ***5.4.1 Output 2.1: indirect management with an international organisation***

The purpose of output 2.1 is to provide partner countries with the adequate infrastructure for monitoring water quality and quantity in pilot areas in line with the WFD. This component of the action may be alternatively implemented in indirect management with the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP) in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

This implementation entails procurement of infrastructure for water quality and water quantity, upgrade of laboratories and related activities.

This implementation is justified because UNDP has in the Eastern Partnership countries an extensive experience in these activities and in this particular field. The organisation has furthermore the required capacity, inter alia through its offices in each of the six countries, which is considered as a key element for implementing the planned activities.

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks:

- Purchase of equipment, including hydrological and water quality monitoring stations
- Rehabilitation and upgrade of existing equipment
- Rehabilitation and upgrade of existing laboratories

The entrusted entity would also carry out the following ancillary tasks:

- Assessment of equipment needs for monitoring quality and quantity of water in designed areas
- Technical support to laboratories for accreditation

The entrusted international organisation is currently undergoing the ex-ante assessment in accordance with Article 61(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. The Commission's authorising officer responsible deems that, based on the compliance with the ex-ante assessment based on Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1605/2002 and long-lasting problem-free cooperation, this international organisations can be entrusted with budget-implementation tasks under indirect management.

The intended trimester to conclude the delegation agreement is the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2016.

#### **5.4.2 Outputs 2.2, 2.3 and 3.1: procurement (direct management)**

The purpose of outputs 2.2, 2.3 and 3.1 is to provide capacity building, to accompany and monitor the implementation of pilot RBMPs and ensure coordination, awareness and visibility of all components of the action. This component of the action may be alternatively implemented through procurement (service contract with a Contractor having adequate qualifications and experience in the field of water management and related EU Directives).

Subject	Type	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Output 2.2 Output 2.3 Output 3.1	Services	1 or 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester of 2016

### 5.5. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility in accordance with Budget Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

### 5.6. Indicative budget

#### Basis implementation modalities

Budget	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Cofinancing (indicative)
Result 1 – outputs 1.1 and 1.2 Grant – Direct award to UNECE or/and OECD (section 5.3.1)	EUR 7 million	EUR 0.4 million
Result 2 - outputs 2.1 – 2.2 – 2.3 Result 3 – output 3.1 Grant – Direct award to EU Member States entity(ies) specialised in water resources management (section 5.3.2)	EUR 16.5 million	EUR 0.9 million
Total	EUR 23.5 million	EUR 1.3 million

#### Alternative implementation modalities (section 5.4)

Budget	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Cofinancing (indicative)
Result 1 – outputs 1.1 and 1.2 Grant – Direct award to UNECE or/and OECD (section 5.3.1)	EUR 7 million	EUR 0.4 million
Result 2 output 2.1 Indirect management with UNDP (section 5.4.1)	EUR 7.2 million	EUR 0.4 million
Result 2 - outputs 2.2 and 2.3 Result 3 – output 3.1 Procurement (direct management) (section 5.4.2)	EUR 9.3 million	Not applicable

Total	EUR 23.5 million	EUR 0.8 million
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### **5.7. Organisational set-up and responsibilities**

The responsibility of the project lies with Commission. The steering of the project will be led by Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

An annual Steering Committee will be led by Commission services (Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) for reviewing the three results of the project and guide the way forward with main stakeholders. Other Commission services (such Environment, International Cooperation and Development, Joint Research Centre) and the European External Action Service will be closely associated.

The Steering Committee will be held back-to-back when possible to high level events, such as the Water Directors Meeting and the EaP Platform 2 on Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies, or panels on environmental governance, in order to allow discussion of results of the projects among EU Member States and EaP Governments.

A permanent office is envisaged in each country to directly support the implementation of the project for all results.

### **5.8. Performance monitoring and reporting**

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partners responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partners shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. This system of monitoring and reporting should also help to analyse the impact of the action. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed, and of the budget details for the action. as well as progress on impact. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

### **5.9. Evaluation**

Having regard to the importance of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that innovative actions on river basins management practices will be tested.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partners at least 2 months in advance of the dates foreseen for the evaluation missions. The implementing partners shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner countries and other key stakeholders. The implementing partners and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner countries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

### **5.10. Audit**

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

Where applicable the provisions included in the framework administrative agreement signed with the United Nations and/or with the OECD will apply.

### **5.11. Communication and visibility**

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation and supported with the budget indicated in section 5.6 above.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner countries, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action<sup>7</sup> shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

Where applicable the provisions included in the framework administrative agreement signed with the United Nations and/or with the OECD will apply.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/communication-and-visibility-manual-eu-external-actions\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/communication-and-visibility-manual-eu-external-actions_en).