



REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA  
MINISTRY OF  
ENVIRONMENT

## DRAFT AGENDA

# 20<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE INTER-MINISERIAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE ON WATER ISSUES IN ARMENIA FOLLOWED BY THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

<b>Date:</b> 3-4 October 2022	<b>Venue:</b> Double Tree by Hilton Yerevan City Centre, 4/2 Grigor Lusavorich, Yerevan, 0015, Armenia	<b>Time:</b> 3 October – 09:00-18:00 4 October: 09:00-13:00 4 October (pm): Optional site visit (registration required)
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## AGENDA

DAY 1		
20TH MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE		
Local Time	Item	Speaker
09:00-09:40	Registration and welcome coffee	
09:40-10:00	Opening and welcoming statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tour de table - Introduction from members of Steering Committee</li> <li>Adoption of Agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- G. Gabrielyan, Deputy Minister of Environment of the Republic of Armenia</li> <li>- F. Hess, Head of Cooperation Section of EU Delegation to Armenia</li> <li>- A. Zinke, EU4Environment Water and Data Programme</li> </ul>
10:00-11:30	Thematic session 1: Dialogue on water resources management in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data project  Session to include planning and progress on River Basin Management Planning, Water Quantitative Management Plan, Water Monitoring including COVID monitoring, Economic Instruments, Mobilising Finance, Water and Health, Legislative developments and Transboundary cooperation in Khrami-Debed River basin	Moderator: OECD  UBA, IOW, UNECE, OECD
11:30-12:00	Q&A and discussion Coffee Break	

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12:00-13:00	<p>Thematic session 2: Dialogue on environmental statistics and open data in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data project</p> <p>Session to include progress on Environmental Data and open data issues, including water accounts, environmental data, air quality, waste, land cover mapping and international co-operation.</p> <p>Q&amp;A and discussion</p>	<p>Moderator: UBA</p> <p>UBA, IOW, UNECE</p>
13:00-14:30	Lunch	
14:30-15:30	<p>Thematic session 3: Donor coordination Part 1 on challenges and opportunities for water sector.</p> <p>To include presentations and dialogue with relevant projects and donors active on water in Armenia. To discuss ongoing activities and principles, achievements, challenges and future opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU4Sevan project</li> <li>• USAID project on Improved Water Management for Sustainable Economic Growth</li> <li>• UNDP projects related to water (climate change, DRR)</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A and discussion</p>	<p>Moderator: Ministry of Environment</p>
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break	
16:00-17:30	<p>Thematic session 3: Donor coordination Part 2 on challenges and opportunities for water sector financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KfW project on IWRM/Akhuryan River Construction of Kaps Reservoir and Gravity Irrigation System</li> <li>• AFD project on Construction and Vedi Reservoir and Irrigation Scheme</li> <li>• Water-related activities of the Country Water Partnership in Armenia</li> <li>• Projects/interventions of other organizations, donors, IFIs</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A and discussion</p>	<p>Moderator: Ministry of Environment</p>
17:30-18:00	Closing remarks and meeting summary	<p>- Chair to provide closing statement, key messages, decisions, next steps</p> <p>- Provide an introductory overview of Day 2</p>
18:00-19:30	Networking Cocktail	

**DAY 2**  
**THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON POTENTIAL OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE RIVER BASIN  
MANAGEMENT IN ARMENIA**

Time	Item	Speaker
08:30-09:00	<b>Registration &amp; Welcome coffee/tea</b>	
09:00-09:15	<b>Opening remarks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- L. Abrahamyan, Head of Water Policy Department of the Ministry of Environment of Armenia</li> <li>- M. Laxton, EC DG Environment (TBC)</li> <li>- A. Belokurov, EU4Environment Water and Data Programme</li> </ul>
09:15-09:30	<b>Scene-setting presentation</b>	IUCN (TBC)
09:30-10:15	<b>Experience from Armenia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing or planned activities under EU4Sevan</li> <li>- Rehabilitation of Khor Virap Ramsar site, supported by Caucasus Nature Fund</li> <li>- Application of nature-based technologies in solving water supply and sanitation issues</li> </ul>	Moderator: Ministry of Environment - EU4Sevan project - Ramsar Convention NFP for Armenia - Jinj LLC
10:15-10:40	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
10:40-11:30	<b>Experience from outside Armenia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Managed aquifer recharge (new EU guidance) / promotion of rainwater infiltration</li> <li>- Joint management of floods between upstream and downstream areas</li> <li>- Creation of buffer zones between water and agriculture</li> <li>- Payment for forest management to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation in reservoirs.</li> <li>- A mechanism by development co-operation partners to support NbS</li> </ul>	Moderator: OECD  UBA IOW IUCN Development cooperation partners
11:30-12:00	<b>Moderated discussion</b> Guiding questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are existing and potential Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for river basin management in Armenia?</li> <li>- How have existing NbS in the country been identified, developed and implemented?</li> <li>- What are challenges to promoting and scaling up to NbS in Armenia?</li> <li>- What can the EU4Environment programme, together with development cooperation partners, do to support Armenia?</li> </ul>	Moderator: UNECE  All participants
12:00-12:15	<b>Closing remarks and next steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possibly to highlight/agree on key priorities (e.g. types of NbS, regions, landscape) that can be included in the “roadmap” to be developed under the EU4Environment Project.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Environment of Republic of Armenia  Representative of EU4Environment Water and Data Programme
12:15-13:15	<b>Lunch</b> (provided at the Double Tree by Hilton Yerevan Centre)	
13:15-17:00	<b>Field trip to Khor Virap Ramsar site</b> [Further information to follow, registration will be required]	

## Background

This is the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on Water Resources Management in Armenia. This meeting marks the milestone of reform of the steering committee participant list and the recent revision of the Water Code of Armenia, which brought country closer to the EU water acquis. NPD facilitates policy discussions where stakeholders meet to advance water policy reforms. NPDs are driven by the demand from the host countries and are usually chaired by heads of respective government agencies. A variety of stakeholders participate in the meetings, such as ministries and government agencies and institutions, as well as non-governmental organisations, the business community, parliamentary bodies, academia. Participants typically include international organisations and EU Member States active in water policy reforms in each country. Under the EU-funded EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme, NPDs are supported in the five Eastern Partner countries.

## Meeting objectives, expected outputs and outcomes

- to provide and update on recent developments in the area of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and policy development;
- to provide an update on the implementation of the road map of 5 EU Water Directives in Armenia under the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement;
- to discuss progress and next steps in implementing the EU4Environment – Water and Data programme in Armenia and to receive feedback from the national stakeholders;
- to provide a platform for coordination of donor activities in the water sector in Armenia and to enhance the international cooperation with partner organisations;
- to open dialogue on Nature Based Solutions (NbS) and potential application and benefits in Armenia;
- to discuss remaining challenges in the area of IWRM and next steps

## Participants

The meeting will gather over 40 participants from ministries, agencies, donors and international projects with an interest in water management in Armenia.

## About EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data

This programme aims at improving people's wellbeing in EU's Eastern Partner Countries and enabling their green transformation in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme's activities are clustered around two specific objectives: 1) support a more sustainable use of water resources and 2) improve the use of sound environmental data and their availability for policy-makers and citizens. It ensures continuity of the Shared Environmental Information System Phase II and the EU Water Initiative Plus for Eastern Partnership programmes.

The programme is implemented by five Partner organisations: Environment Agency Austria (UBA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), International Office for Water (OiEau) (France), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The action is principally funded by the European Union, and co-funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation and the French Artois-Picardie Water

Agency based on a budget of EUR 12,75 million (EUR 12 million EU contribution). The implementation period is 2021-2024.

## Draft background notes on the NbS thematic workshop

### Background

There is an increasing interest in Nature-based Solutions (NbS) across the world, as an approach to contribute to multiple sustainability objectives, including water resource management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, food security and land use management. While recognising that there is a variety of definitions, the term NbS can be used here as “solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. (European Commission, 2021)”. In so doing, NbS will contribute to protecting, sustainably managing or restoring nature, with the goal of maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services to address a variety of social, environmental and economic challenges (OECD 2020).

NbS align with the overall objectives of the The EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data programme, the different mandates and expertise of the implementing partners. NbS have a great potential to have a positive impact on water quality and quantity in Armenia, slowing down runoff and increasing infiltration, favouring natural retention and clean up and creating or improving habitats, supporting biodiversity. However, there remains several gaps in Armenia to fully recognising the potential and applicability of NbS, implementing and financing them and evaluating their effectiveness.

### Meeting objectives, expected outputs and outcomes

This session aims to:

- Provide explanation (including criteria and standards), overview and benefits of what are different types of NbS compared to other water management solutions in river basins
- Exchange experience and views among Armenian stakeholders and development partners on:
  - What existing and potential Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for river basin management exist in Armenia.
  - How existing NbS in the country have been developed and implemented.
- Enhance understanding of definition, benefits and challenges of NbS for Armenia’s climate and biodiversity related targets and sustainable river basin management in terms of:
  - How NbS can be further scaled up in Armenia.
  - What challenges to scaling up are.
- Identify key priorities (e.g. types of NbS, regions, landscape) that can potentially be included in the “roadmap” to be developed under the EU4Environment Project.