
Terms of Reference of the Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group (MA EG)

ICPDR IKSD

International Commission
for the Protection
of the Danube River

Internationale Kommission
zum Schutz der Donau

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Group (MA EG) of the ICPDR

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group (MA EG) is an Expert Body of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR).
- 1.2 The ToR provide a mandate to the MA EG to take action in the subject areas described below. The ToR also provide guidance to the work, which the MA EG is expected to undertake, and to its general working arrangements.

2. Objective (Mission statement)

The overall objective of the MA EG is to provide the ICPDR with information on the state of the waters in the Danube River Basin (including the ecological and chemical status as required by WFD) and, in line with the DRPC and the relevant EU legislation, to organize the monitoring programmes (or compilation of monitoring information) necessary to ensure that the appropriate information is available.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The MA EG is responsible for initiating, guiding and ensuring the successful completion of the work required under its ToR.
- 3.2 The MA EG will report regularly to the ICPDR and its Standing Working Group on the implementation of ongoing activities, on proposed activities and the results achieved.
- 3.3 The MA EG is responsible for the establishment - subject to the approval of the ICPDR or its Standing Working Group - and guidance of time limited Task Groups to provide needed input to fulfil the tasks listed below.
- 3.4 Proposed activities with policy or financial implications for the ICPDR must be approved, in advance, by the ICPDR.

4. Main tasks of the MA EG

The MA EG is entrusted to carry out the following main tasks:

- 4.1 steering the joint operation of the TNMN by coordinating the relevant monitoring and assessment activities carried out in each Contracting Party;
- 4.2 maintaining the DanubeTNMN database, in particular the quantity and quality of data collected in cooperation with national responsible institutions, and continuously upgrade its structure as necessary (in particular it should be ensured that the database is compatible with and supports the information requirements under the WFD).
- 4.3 developing the TNMN reporting format and upgrading it as required to ensure its compatibility with reporting formats used within EU (WISE);
- 4.4 improving the setup of the monitoring systems within the TNMN for the assessment of chemical, physico-chemical, biological and hydromorphological quality elements in line with WFD requirements and based on practical experience gained;
- 4.5 improving understanding and developing of criteria for assessment of status and impacts and assessment trends of status and impacts;
- 4.6 reviewing and updating the monitoring methodologies and analytical procedures for the determinants monitored within the TNMN;
- 4.7 ensuring that performance of monitoring methods (e.g. sampling, sample preparation, analytical tests) agreed and used within laboratories participating in the TNMN are carried out using appropriate quality assurance procedures (ISO/EN compatible); improving the quality assurance procedures of laboratories (the selected national reference and regional laboratories) in order to improve the comparability of data;
- 4.8 evaluating training requirements related to the TNMN operation and organise trainings on relevant subjects (monitoring, analytical methods intercomparison/proficiency testing schemes, analytical methodologies, reporting) for target audiences (national reference laboratories, national information centres, etc.);
- 4.9 preparing yearbooks on the water quality;
- 4.10 reporting annually on the Danube loads discharged into the Black Sea in line with the MoU between the ICPDR and BSC, and cooperation with the Danube-Black Sea Joint Technical Expert Group in assessing the overall impact of the Danube to the status of the Black Sea;
- 4.11 supporting basin-wide harmonisation in characterisation of surface water body types according to Annex II of the WFD;
- 4.12 providing guidance and scientific advice to the assessment of ecological and chemical status of surface waters leading to the overall ecological and chemical classification of water bodies for the purposes of the WFD;
- 4.13 harmonising the approaches used by the Contracting Parties for the assessment of the susceptibility of the status of surface water bodies to the relevant pressures (assessment of impacts);
- 4.14 organising, in line with WFD and DRPC requirements, basin-wide monitoring surveys (Joint Danube Surveys) focussed primarily on filling the data gaps and strengthening basin-wide harmonisation;

- 4.15 investigating new trends and upcoming issues in the DRBD (e.g. invasive alien species, climate change, biodiversity, microplastics) and preparing overview papers accordingly.
- 4.16 coordinate, at the level of the Danube River Basin District, the activities towards characterisation of the status of relevant transboundary groundwater bodies;
- 4.17 develop, in line with WFD requirements, transboundary groundwater monitoring in the Danube River Basin District;
- 4.18 prepare, as appropriate, project proposals in support of its tasks and follow up on project implementation.
- 4.19 review its ToR on a regular basis and propose amendments for approval by the ICPDR.
- 4.20 prepare appropriate information for dissemination to interested bodies and the public about MA EG activities in close cooperation with the PP EG.
- 4.21 prepare a Work Program for future activities of the MA EG. This will be prepared according to the requirements of the ICPDR and should include action(s) planned for the following three years.

5. Cooperation with other ICPDR bodies

The MA EG will collaborate closely with all other ICPDR Expert Bodies, as appropriate.

6. Membership

- 6.1 The MA EG consists of the representatives as nominated by the Contracting Parties to be a standing member of the MA EG. Additional experts may also participate in meetings if their particular specialist knowledge is required.
- 6.2 Each Contracting Party may propose candidates (one or more) to participate in time-limited Task Groups organised to address specific issues.
- 6.3 Representatives of other organisations may become accredited observers to the MA EG and/or its Task Groups by following the relevant procedures of the ICPDR relating to observer status.

7. Working Arrangements

The general working arrangements for the MA EG are provided by the ICPDR Rules of Procedure.