

## REGIONAL REPORT ON OUTPUT 1.1: THE FIRST CYCLE OF RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLANNING (RBMP) IS EXTENDED

PUBLIC REPORT



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**EU4Environment**  
Water and Data in Eastern Partner Countries

EU4Environment in Eastern Partner Countries:  
Water Resources and Environmental Data (ENI/2021/425-550)

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

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## **ABOUT EU4ENVIRONMENT – WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA**

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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 co-funded by the European Union, 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.

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## List of abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADI	Intercommunal Development Association
AFD	French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement)
CIS	Common Implementation Strategy (for WFD)
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EC	European Commission
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EU	European Union
EUWI+	European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
INBO	International Network of Basin Organizations
MEPR	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources (Ukraine)
MoENV	Ministry of Environment (Republic of Moldova)
NbS	Nature-Based Solutions
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPD	National Policy Dialogue
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PoM	Programme of Measures
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RBD	River Basin District
SAWR	State Agency for Water Resources (Ukraine)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SIE-SEE	International Secretariat for Water (Solidarity Water Europe)
UBA	Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Environment Agency Austria)
UHMI	Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFD	Water Framework Directive

## 1. Introduction

The EU4Environment Water and Data (EU4EnvWD) programme supported the development, revision, and implementation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in line with the EU Water Framework Directive. Under Output 1.1, the programme focused on preparing and updating RBMPs across selected Eastern Partnership river basin districts, targeting good ecological and chemical water status. It further aimed to strengthen the capacities of water authorities and stakeholders involved in basin planning and implementation. Emphasizing participatory governance, the programme promoted active engagement of river basin councils and local communities in decision-making. Additionally, it encouraged the integration of nature-based solutions and the promotion of cost-effective measures to address water quality, quantity, and ecosystem health.

This report presents the regional achievements under **Output 1.1** of the **EU4Environment Water and Data (EU4EnvWD) programme**, focusing on support to the **first cycle of River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development** across the Eastern Partnership countries. The report consolidates progress made between 2021 and 2024 in **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine**, documenting methodologies used, results achieved, and lessons learned.

The report is structured around country-specific results, complemented by regional-level activities. It highlights both technical and institutional progress in aligning national water management systems with the **EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)**.

## 2. Executive Summary

The EU4EnvWD programme aimed at supported the development, revision, and implementation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in line with the EU Water Framework Directive. Under its Output 1.1, its key objectives included:

- Preparation and update of RBMPs for selected river basin districts across the Eastern Partnership countries, with a strong emphasis on achieving good ecological and chemical status of waters.
- Capacity-building for water authorities and stakeholders involved in river basin planning and implementation.
- Promotion of participative processes, ensuring that river basin councils and local communities were engaged in the planning and decision-making.
- Integration of nature-based solutions and support for cost-effective measures to address water quality, quantity, and ecosystem health.

In order to reach those objectives, the EU4Environment Water and Data programme has provided support in those fields in particular through international experts coordination, organisation of workshops and meetings (online and physical), field visits, drafting of methodologies and reports and through contract services of local consultants in the countries.

As main outcomes, **significant progress was achieved in the development of RBMPs** under the EU4Environment Water and Data programme. In **Armenia** (Northern River Basin District) and **Georgia** (Enguri and Rioni River Basin Districts), three new draft RBMPs were finalised. In **Ukraine, all nine RBMPs were completed and adopted**, building on sustained support to national experts for the Dnipro RBMP and two rounds of expert review for the remaining eight plans. Upon finalisation of the Strategic Environmental Assessments and completion of public consultations, the Government of Ukraine formally adopted all RBMPs by December 2024.

Public consultations constitute a key element of the RBM planning cycle. In **Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, rounds of stakeholder consultation meetings were organised** to present and discuss the RBMP development timeline, key components, and the associated Programmes of Measures. In Ukraine, public consultations for the RBMPs were conducted in a structured, participatory manner under the EU4Environment Water and Data programme. These consultations were organized in coordination with the national authorities and involved key stakeholders, including local administrations, basin councils, NGOs, and academic institutions. One could mention that Basin Councils have yet to be established in the South Caucasus. In Azerbaijan, initial discussions on their creation have commenced, including through a dedicated workshop in Baku. Efforts to strengthen stakeholder engagement also included collaboration with academic institutions, exemplified by activities such as participation in the EU4Energy Students' Week and a thematic lecture delivered at the French-Azerbaijani University in autumn–winter 2023.

As part of its technical support to Eastern Partnership countries, the EU4Environment Water and Data programme delivered **targeted support for the development and implementation of methodologies, technical guidance, and secondary legislation** aligned with EU water directives. EU4Environment Water and Data experts were providing regular methodological inputs to Beneficiary representatives and service contractors along the way while preparing the RBMPs. This was based on the previous methodological guidances prepared under EUWI+East and the EU guidance documents on WFD implementation



produced under the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS). In addition to that general support, some specific activities were delivered to ad hoc needs of Beneficiary countries.

In the field of **Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)**, **national workshops** were conducted under the framework of National Policy Dialogue (NPD), complemented by a study visit to selected NbS sites. In addition, an innovative **NbS Catalogue** to support RBMP implementation was developed. Under the coordination of International Office for Water, the catalogue was informed by stakeholders' feedback and included contributions from Implementing Partners. It was elaborated and presented during **two regional workshops** (June 2023 and October 2024) and subsequently published in five languages. Additionally, three NbS concept notes were developed in Azerbaijan and Moldova to support future pilot applications.



### 3. Preparation of remaining river basin management plans to achieve a good qualitative and quantitative status of water bodies

The results in this field have been numerous at regional level and for each country.

Firstly, at regional level it is important to highlight that the **support from the EU4Environment Water and Data programme has contributed to the signature of the Trilateral Declaration on Cooperation for the Prut River Basin, on 20 October 2023 in Kyiv, by the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania.**

The Prut river, a major tributary of the Danube, stretches for 953 km and forms a large part of the border between Moldova and Romania. The agreement strengthens joint efforts in water monitoring, flood and drought management, biodiversity conservation, and public participation.

An official trilateral working group has been established and is now working under the umbrella of the ICPDR (International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River) to address key international issues on a basin-wide basis, based on this new agreement. This includes some initial exchanges on the elaboration of a trilateral River Basin Management Plan for the Prut.

#### 3.1. ARMENIA

In December 2022, the **adoption of Hrazdan and Sevan RBMPs** occurred, drafted during EUWI+ project (respectively Government Resolutions No 1909-N and No 1912-N)

In Armenia, **the Northern River Basin RBMP was prepared** under the supervision of EU4Environment Water and Data experts. A specific service contract was launched in early 2023 and implemented by Local Consultants who supported the data collection, drafting of chapters and preparation of RBMP contents.

The EU4Environment Water and Data experts steered and managed the contract (with the Beneficiary institutions) provided the methodological insights and reviewed all chapters along their production phases. Several missions in Armenia were performed to support this elaboration, the finalisation of the RBMP and discuss the perspectives for its PoM implementation in the future with the Water Policy Department of the Ministry of Environment of Armenia and the Water Committee.

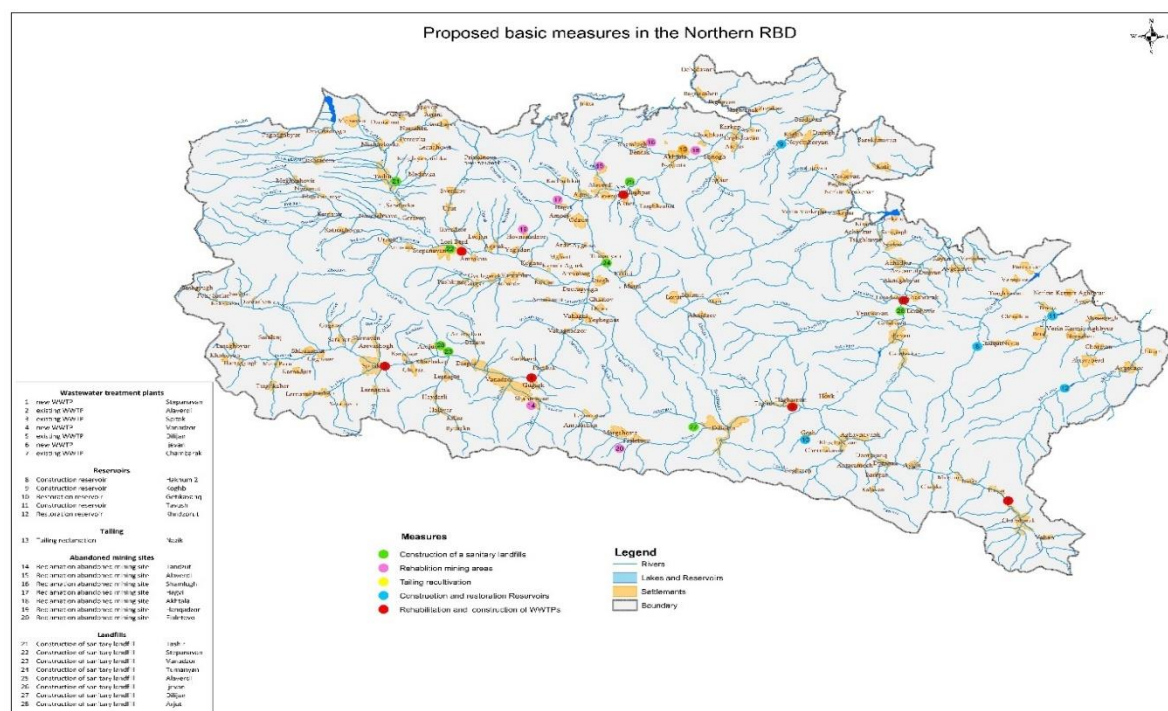


Figure 1: Map of Basic Measures proposed for the 1st implementation cycle, Northern River Basin, Armenia.

As required by the WFD, the participation of stakeholders played a key role in this RBM development.

A **Kick-off meeting and workshop for Northern RBMP** was first organised on 16 February 2023 in Dzoraget in order to present the approach and timeline for the development of RBMP for the Northern RBD of Armenia, introduce the team and experts involved in the development, and initiate dialogue with the local stakeholders in order to insure a participative development of the plan.

The **first consultation meeting on the Characterisation and main issues Northern RBMP** was held in Dzoraget on 13 October 2023. The meeting was attended by 31 participants, representing national authorities from Yerevan, local self-government authorities, local NGOs, civil society and water users, and the Water Policy Department of the Ministry of Environment of Armenia.



Figure 2: *Northern basin Consultation meeting, Dzoraget, October 2023.*

The **second consultation meeting for the Northern RBMP**, focused on the Programme of Measures, was held in Dzoraget on 23 July 2024. The meeting was attended by 35 participants, including representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures, Statistical Committee of Armenia, as well as Lori and Tavush regional authorities, water users' associations, local communities, and donors.

In addition, the **Strategic environmental Assessment** was also prepared and conducted in parallel with the process of RBMP preparation. All steps and public meetings were held according to the Armenian legislation, which allows for future adoption of the Northern Basin RBMP.

### 3.2. Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan there was no preparation of a River Basin Management Plan, but the EU4Environment Water and Data support allowed contributions to the preparatory steps of defining River Basin Districts.

A workshop on River Basin Districts delineation and on River Basin Organisations was organised in February 2023 to support the integration of the Basin management approach into the National Strategy for Water Resources.

The EU4Environment Water and Data experts consequently proposed the approach for RBD delineation and prepared a preliminary version that has been presented at the Academy of Science of Azerbaijan. Consequently, a presentation of the proposed RBDs for Azerbaijan was realised during the NPD in April 2023. Consultations and exchanges in December 2023 allowed to draft a **final RBDs delineation proposal and a specific report on delineation of River Basin Districts in Azerbaijan** was published.

The economic region of Lankaran could be considered as a whole River Basin District. Therefore EU delegation organized a contact between the Programme and EU4Lankaran project. The idea was to **initiate a River Basin Management Plan** in this area. Many documents have been sent to the EU4Lankaran project team and it has been decided to organise a dedicated workshop in Lankaran. Consequently, the workshop has been prepared but cancelled at the last minute in December 2023 because of tensions between Lankaran authorities, central authorities from Baku and the EU.

### 3.3. Georgia

In Georgia, **two new draft RBMPs were prepared and finalised for the Enguri and Rioni River Basins**, under the supervision of EU4Environment Water and Data experts. A specific service contract was launched in early 2023 and implemented by Local Consultants who supported the data collection, drafting of chapters and preparation of RBMP contents.

The EU4Environment Water and Data experts steered and managed the contract (together with the Beneficiary institutions) provided the methodological insights and reviewed all chapters along their production phases. Several missions in Georgia were performed to support this elaboration, the finalisation of the RBMP and discuss the perspectives for the Programme of measures implementation in the future.

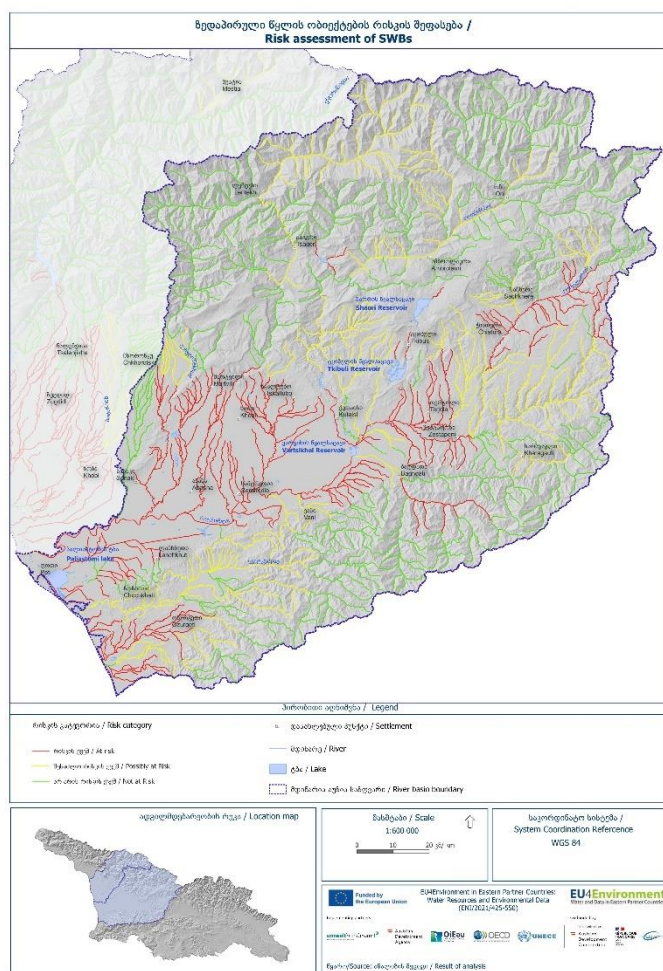


Figure 3: Map of the Surface Water Bodies at risk, Enguri River Basin, Georgia

Supporting this development of RBMPs, two rounds of stakeholders consultation meetings were organised by the Programme.

**Kick-off meeting and workshop for Enguri and Rioni RBMPs** on 14 February 2023 with 58 participants from all municipalities of both Enguri and Rioni basins, regional administrations, water utility companies, agriculture sector, hydro-power generation, representatives of local NGOs, representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, National Environmental Agency, regional offices of the MEPA Special Department of Environmental Supervision, Rural Development Agency, AFD (French Agency of International Development).





Figure 4: Rioni River Basin Consultation, Kobuleti, October 2024

The second **public consultation meetings on the Enguri and Rioni River Basin Management Plans** took place on 1 and 3 October 2024 in Tskaltubo and Kobuleti. The meetings brought together key stakeholders, including national and local authorities, NGOs, and representatives from academia. Discussions centered on presenting final results of the Rioni RBMP and reviewing the draft PoMs. The participants aimed to agree on the key PoMs and prioritise their implementation to address pressing water management issues in the basins. The meetings also provided a platform for discussions on the ways to implement these measures, with particular focus on ensuring that all parties—national and local authorities, NGOs, and the scientific community—are aligned in their efforts.

### 3.4. Moldova

During the programme implementation, the **Danube Prut Black Sea RBMP cycle II has been adopted** in June 2022. Although not yet an EU country, Moldova is already implementing the second cycle of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for its two main river basin districts (RBD): the Danube-Prut and Black Sea and the Dniester RBD. These plans, developed with previous EU support, enable stakeholders to collectively plan key actions to prevent water pollution and overuse, and to achieve good overall water status.

One of the main accomplishments for Moldova was the instigating and drafting an international declaration regarding cooperation on the management of water issues in the whole Prut River Basin. Thanks to the support from UNECE & UBA, the declaration has been officially transmitted by MD authorities to RO and UA partners through diplomatic channel, in coordination with ICPDR and then lead to the **signature of a Trilateral Declaration regarding cooperation on the management of water issues in the whole Prut River Basin** has been signed 20 October 2023 by MD, RO and UA Ministries.

As a follow-up, the ToR of an ICPDR Prut expert group has been formed for the implementation of this agreement.

The programme support has also targeted the **strengthening of capacities** towards concrete implementation of the Water Directives and the RBMPs.

One of the supporting activities was to provide **assistance to the sub-basin committees of the Danube, Prut and the Black Sea hydrological district** for improving project management capacities necessary for the water management at basin level. In that respect, 1 new sub-basin committee was created and registered (Sarata-Alcalia from the Black Sea basin), 7 action plans were elaborated and 8 project concepts (1 per sub-basin committee) were elaborated and finalized to be submit to donors.

In addition, a **Forum of the Danube-Prut and the Black Sea district** and the celebration of the International Black Sea Day were also supported.

Another focus area was the **support to the recently established Nirnova Basin Intercommunal Development Association (ADI)**. The group of municipalities was established in accordance with the Law No. 17 of 02.02.2023 on Intercommunal Development Associations of the Republic of Moldova.

Following the Water and Sanitation Master Plan developed with EU support, the EU4Environment - Water and Data programme was supporting the ADI in the selection of an operator to provide water and sanitation services to the population

The programme also supported the organisation of **ADI first meeting in January 2024** which was attended by the Ministries of Environment, of Infrastructure and Regional Development of the Republic of Moldova, by Water Solidarity Europe and International Secretariat for Water (SIE-SEE), representative of the Moldovan Parliament, French Embassy in the Republic of Moldova, Apele Moldovei Water Agency, Artois Picardie Water Agency from France, Presidents of Hincesti and Nisporeni Raions and Mayors from Nisporeni and Hincesti Raions.

The EU4Environment Water and Data Programme also supports the **technical clarifications necessary for the implementation of three main actions of the Water and Sanitation Master Plan**:

- Southern area: completion of the main water supply (bringing water to the main water tower)
- Northern area: Water supply comes from Iași in Romania, the aim is to complete the main drinking water supply (bringing water to the main water tower) and to develop the internal distribution network (water supply to the houses).
- Calculation of the costs of completing the internal distribution networks





Figure 5: First meeting of Nirnova Basin Intercommunal Development Association, January 2024.

### 3.5. Ukraine

Since the Russian war of aggression started during the inception phase of the Programme, the EU experts were limited to mainly cooperate with the UA beneficiaries and the EU4EnvWD Representative and Administrative Assistant via online tools.

Despite those circumstances, the achievements of Ukraine with the support of the EU4Environment Water and Data programme have been notable. The swift preparation and subsequent **adoption of all 9 RBMPs in Ukraine** by the UA Government in late 2024 was an unprecedented milestone in the EaP region.

**At first the support was targeted to the Update and finalisation of the Dnipro RBMP.** The Terms of Reference for the finalisation of the Dnipro RBMP have been prepared and discussed with the Beneficiary and a specific Service contact was launched in 2022. This allowed the mobilisation of Local Consultants who supported the data collection, drafting of chapters and preparation of RBMP contents.

The EU4Environment Water and Data experts steered and managed the contract (together with the Beneficiary institutions) provided the methodological insights and reviewed all chapters along their production phases. This included:

- Organisation of 7 workshops on-line and in various cities (Kyiv, Chernihiv, Lviv, Vinnytsia, etc.) about RBMP/PoM gathering around 300 participants from BUVR, Vodokanals, water users.
- Presentation of the RBMP process during the Middle Dnipro Basin Council.
- Process and outline in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Decree N°336 and European Water Framework Directive Annex 7.
- Initial draft from EUWI+ project, Feb. 2021.
- Production of a template for measures collection and presentation.
- First draft of the 5 first chapters produced in July 2023.
- Preparation of: economic analysis, tables of measures for each sub-basin.

Taking stocks of that experience, during the course of the programme implementation, the decision was made to initiate the development or updating RBMPs for additional basins. Consequently, the **River Basin Management Plans** (RBMPs) for nine River Basin Districts (Azov Sea, Black Sea, Crimea, Danube, Dniester, Dnipro, Don, Southern Bug, Vistula) have been finalised by a team of competent local experts (Blue Rivers in close coordination with SAWR and MEPNR) supported by the EU4Environment Water and Data Programme.

Between February and June 2023 several online meetings and consultations were held with SAWR, UHMI and MEPR to **determine nutrient-vulnerable zones** (Nitrate Directive/WFD-RBMPs). In autumn 2023 EU experts prepared a resolving short text that was copied into the related chapter in each RBMP.

All the draft RBMPs were **screened by the EU experts** in early 2024, who suggested various improvements which were implemented and then reviewed again by the EU experts in May-June 2024. A concluding statement by the EU experts found that the RBMPs were in compliance with the WFD, even though the database was extremely weak.

In parallel, **Strategic Environmental Assessments** had been prepared and equally submitted for consultation in spring 2024.

From December 2023 to June 2024 the draft RBMPs were also the subject of a **public consultation** process. Stakeholder comments were taken into account in the final draft RBMPs submitted to MEPR in July 2024 for intra-ministerial consultation and formal adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 1 November 2024.

The Danube RBMP was adopted on 31 December 2024, due to a delay of responses from neighbouring countries (Romania and Hungary).

**Summary leaflets** for each RBMP and for all nine RBMPs were prepared by the UA team with guidance from the EU experts, who also provided funds for printing in Ukrainian and English.

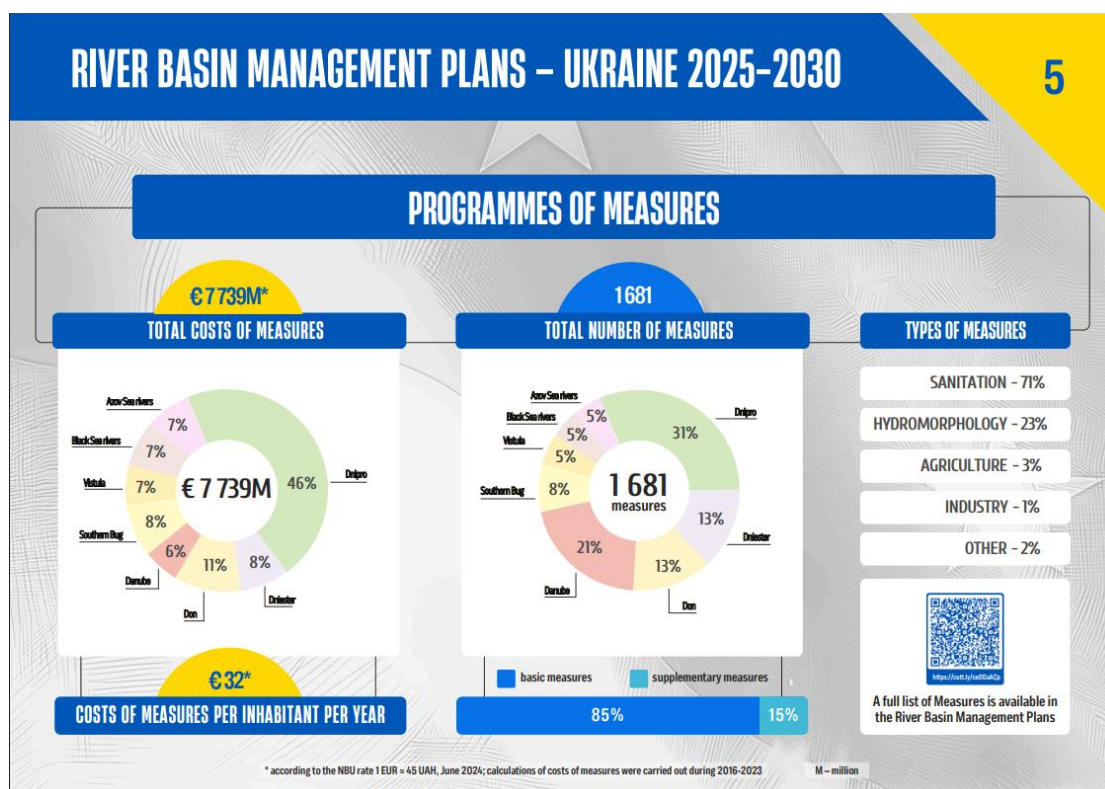


Figure 6: Extract from the leaflet RBMPS in UA, Programme of measures and related costs, December 2024.

In the frame of the activities and as a conclusion of the works on RBMPs development in Ukraine, the Programme experts have produced a “**Note on the first Ukrainian River Basin Management Plans**” in November 2024.

This concluding note on the final draft RBMPs after public consultation and adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers reviewed the EU support and the result accomplished by the Ukrainian team of experts. It found that, in spite of very limited data and information about surface, coastal and groundwaters, these first nine RBMPs with their annexes were prepared with sound quality. They sufficiently meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), as was the case for similar first generation plans in EU Member States. This is a remarkable result in light of the weak database in the country and the major work challenges caused by the Russian war of aggression.

The report provided a number of concrete recommendations of where and how to improve the next plans in their content and legal framework. It underlined that the implementation of the existing plans needs full commitment and further international support.

## 4. Development of guidance documents and secondary legislation

As part of its technical assistance to Eastern Partnership countries, the EU4Environment Water and Data programme delivered **targeted support for the development and implementation of methodologies, technical guidance, and secondary legislation** aligned with EU water directives.

EU4Environment Water and Data experts were providing **regular methodological inputs** to Beneficiary representatives and service contractors along the way while preparing the RBMPs. This was based on the previous methodological guidances prepared under EUWI+East and the EU guidance documents on WFD implementation produced under the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS).

In addition to that support, some specific outcomes are detailed hereafter.

In **Armenia**, the programme supported the development of a model **River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) outline** to guide future planning efforts. It was approved by the command n°26 of the Minister of Environment of January 27, 2023 “OUTLINE OF BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN”. This template aligns with EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) requirements, serves as a practical tool for national authorities in structuring their RBMP development processes. One could also underline the fact that some specificities for Armenia were introduced in the outline, in order to account for national specificities and water management objectives. For example the RBMPs in Armenia comprises a chapter dedicated to water balances and quantitative aspects.

**Moldova** also benefitted from a broad range of support measures, particularly related to the **EU WFD and Nitrates Directive** (91/676/EEC). This included:

- **Calendar and Planning:** Recommendations were provided for structuring the RBMP development timelines.
- **Institutional Coordination:** The programme facilitated dialogue and cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture regarding the implementation of the Nitrates Directive. An initial workshop was held on 14 December 2023 to present challenges and define needs.
- **Technical Documentation:** Terms of Reference were prepared for the development of a national Action Programme under the Nitrates Directive, with the contract signed in March 2024. A follow-up workshop on 2 July 2024 enabled stakeholders to review and discuss the draft programme.
- **Draft Legislation:** A draft Action Programme was developed by September 2024, accompanied by expert advice on sustainable agricultural practices aimed at reducing water pollution from nitrates.
- In a specific workshop, national stakeholders, including representatives from both environmental and agricultural ministries, reaffirmed their commitment to aligning with EU environmental standards. The Action Programme was identified as a key tool for both EU accession and enhanced protection of water resources.



Figure 7: Nitrates Directive Workshop, Moldova, July 2024.

**In Ukraine**, methodological and institutional support focused on the finalisation and quality improvement of RBMPs, particularly for the Dnipro basin. Key activities included:

- Programme of Measures (PoM) Guidance:

A comprehensive **guidance document on the development of PoMs** was integrated into the Terms of Reference for finalising the Dnipro RBMP. Draft methodological recommendations were discussed with the Scientific and Technical Council of the State Agency for Water Resources (SAWR) and subsequently disseminated to Basin Councils.

- Assessment of war damages on water and ecosystems:

Some discussions and methodological test were carried out to propose specific **studies to evaluate war damages on protected areas** and diversion of Crimea canal in particular. The proposals were however not fully endorsed by the Beneficiary and more works are still needed to develop a comprehensive methodology, in particular for future updating of the pressures and impacts assessment for next RBMP cycle.





Figure 8: Training Workshop, Ukraine, September 2023.

- Capacity Development:

Regular technical exchanges occurred with Ukrainian experts. As a follow-up of lessons learned and methodological developments, a **two-day national training workshop** (5–6 September 2023), was organised in cooperation with SAWR. It brought together experts from water authorities, ministries, and the EU4Environment team. It focused on:

- Characterisation of surface and groundwater bodies
- Assessment of anthropogenic pressures and monitoring systems
- Setting environmental objectives and evaluating the cost-effectiveness of measures
- Integration of RBMPs into broader policy frameworks and strengthening the role of Basin Councils
- Strategic Environmental Assessments and public consultation processes.

Collectively, these actions contributed to advancing the regulatory and methodological readiness of partner countries for EU environmental alignment, while ensuring tangible progress in national RBMP implementation.

## 5. Development and promotion of nature-based solutions

Nature-Based Solutions can play a crucial role in RBMPs, offering sustainable approaches that address environmental challenges while preserving biodiversity and natural resources. These solutions provide cost-effective, long-term alternatives to traditional infrastructure investments.

In order to improve the knowledge base and the practical availability of information on NBS in the EaP Countries, the EU4Environment Water and Data Programme implemented a structured approach, consisting in:

- The development of a Catalogue of Nature Based Solutions
- Organisation of Workshops and study visits
- Identification of potential case and development of Concept notes on specific NBS.

An innovative NbS Catalogue to support RBMP implementation was developed. Under the coordination of International Office for Water, the catalogue was informed by stakeholders' feedback and included contributions from Implementing Partners. It provides a comprehensive guide tailored to address specific water-related challenges in each EaP country. It also features a range of solutions that can help mitigate issues such as water pollution, flow disruption, and hydromorphological changes, which at the same time are also improving biodiversity and climate adaptation.

It serves as a valuable resource for decision-makers, helping them identify and prioritize the most suitable Nature-Based Solutions for their regions. It includes detailed factsheets, implementation recommendations, and financing options, supporting the incorporation of NbS into Programmes of Measures (PoMs) within River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs).

In details, the **Catalogue of Nature-Based Solutions for Water Management** in the Eastern Partnership Countries offers:

- 34 documented NbS factsheets with case studies and technical references
- Examples of cost calculations and unit costs
- Practical guidance for practitioners, decision-makers, and researchers
- Examples of NbS already in use across the region include:
  - Community forest and pasture management in Moldova's Orhei National Park
  - Agroforestry systems in Georgia to reduce wind erosion
  - Steppe ecosystem restoration in Ukraine to protect wildlife habitats

The catalogue was prepared in English and subsequently published in five languages.

**Two regional workshops** (July 2023 and October 2024) occurred during the frame of its elaboration.

The first workshop held online on July 6, 2023 gathered 131 participants, including experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. They shared experiences centered around the



implementation of nature-based solutions to combat soil erosion, mitigate floods, and address biodiversity loss. The concept and outline of the catalogue have been presented and the insights shared during the workshop had a valuable role in structuring the catalogue on nature-based solutions.

The second online regional workshop took place on October 30, 2024. It was attended by nearly 200 participants from Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and the EU, including national authorities, water experts, water user representatives, donors, and various organizations engaged in water management and Nature-based Solution projects. The workshop emphasized the critical role of Nature-based Solutions in tackling water-related issues and aligning with EU law, notably the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

In parallel to those activities, **National workshops on Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)** were also organised back-to-back with the NPD meetings, in Georgia (December 2022), Moldova (April 2023) and Armenia (October 2023). They were complemented by study visits to selected NbS site. Those national workshops helped raising awareness from the NPD participants to the subject of NBS and provide links with water policies and strategies.

Finally, **three NBS concept notes for specific sites** have been produced.

In Azerbaijan, a concept note “Bringing Back Nature in the Kura Delta (Azerbaijan)” was prepared in April 2023. This note explores restoring wetlands and reedbeds in the Kura Delta to support biodiversity (notably sturgeon and migratory birds), engage stakeholders, and design a participatory restoration programme. In August 2023, the concept note was being considered to be included to the Annual Action Programme 2024 between EU and AZ.

A NBS concept note “Hajigabul Lake NbS” was produced in Azerbaijan.”. Focused on the Hajigabul Lake basin, this concept note outlines NbS interventions to enhance water quality, restore ecological balance, engage governance actors, and improve water-resource health.

In Moldova, the NBS concept note “Riparian Forest Restoration for Water Resources Protection in Moldova” was produced during the programme and presented to Apele Moldove Agency. It outlines a project focused on reforestation (specifically riparian afforestation) aimed at improving water security, enhancing ecosystem services, preventing riverbank erosion, and bolstering climate resilience across Moldova’s agricultural and rural landscapes. At the end of 2024, it was proposed to AFD for financing in conjunction with the European Investment Bank Synergistic operation developed according to the Team Europe Initiative concept.

## 6. Conclusion

The EU4Environment Water and Data programme has significantly advanced the adoption and implementation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) across the Eastern Partnership countries, contributing to the alignment with EU environmental legislation and the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Through targeted technical assistance, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and the provision of innovative tools such as the Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) Catalogue, the programme has enhanced institutional capacity and policy coherence at national and regional levels.

Key achievements include:

- The successful preparation, consultation, and adoption of all nine RBMPs in Ukraine, even under the constraints of wartime conditions.
- The preparation of new RBMPs in Armenia and Georgia, supported by stakeholder consultations and strategic environmental assessments.
- The initiation and formalization of trilateral cooperation for the Prut River Basin involving Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania.
- Methodological and legislative support for the development of water-related action programmes, especially regarding the Nitrates Directive in Moldova.
- The fostering of participatory governance mechanisms through the establishment of sub-basin committees and the support of intercommunal associations in Moldova.
- The integration of nature-based solutions into water planning frameworks, supported by the NbS Catalogue, regional workshops and NBS concept notes marks a progressive shift toward sustainable and adaptive water resource management.

Looking forward, the continued implementation and updating of RBMPs, further institutionalization of basin councils, and enhancement of cross-border cooperation remain critical. Strengthening data quality, monitoring infrastructure, and public participation will be essential to ensure the resilience and effectiveness of water governance across the region.

The EU4Environment Water and Data programme has laid a robust foundation for future environmental progress in the Eastern Partnership countries. Sustained political commitment, stakeholder collaboration, and international support will be vital to consolidate these achievements and advance towards the EU4Green Recovery Programme.

## 7. Links to the published documents and news articles

### 7.1. River Basin Management Plans and Events – EU4Environment Water & Data

#### 7.1.1. Armenia

Adoption of Hrazdan and Sevan RBMPs

<https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/54-eap-region/169-latest-updates-november-december-2022.html>

Kick-off workshop for Northern RBMP – 16 February 2023

<https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/en/events/42-armenia/174-inception-workshop-rbmp-northern-river-basin-thursday-16-february-2023%2C-dzoraget%2C-armenia.html>

First consultation meeting Northern RBMP – 13 October 2023

<https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/30-armenia/184-armenia-kicks-off-the-planning-process-for-the-northern-river-basin.html>

Second consultation meeting Northern RBMP – 23 July 2024

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/30-armenia/367-armenian-stakeholders-convene-in-dzoraget-to-discuss-the-draft-northern-river-basin-management-plan.html>

#### 7.1.2. Azerbaijan

Final RBD delineation proposal report

[https://eu4waterdata.eu/images/pdf/library/EU4WD\\_AZ\\_Report\\_RBD\\_Delineation\\_20230302.pdf](https://eu4waterdata.eu/images/pdf/library/EU4WD_AZ_Report_RBD_Delineation_20230302.pdf)

#### 7.1.3. Georgia

Kick-off meeting for Enguri and Rioni RBMPs – 14 February 2023

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/32-georgia/183-georgia-kicks-off-the-planning-process-for-enguri-and-rioni-river-basins.html>

Second public consultation meetings – 1 and 3 October 2024

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/32-georgia/390-consultation-meetings-for-the-enguri-and-rioni-river-basin-management-plans-in-georgia-%E2%80%93-programme-of-measures.html>

#### 7.1.4. Moldova & Transboundary

Trilateral Declaration – Prut River Basin

[https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/images/pdf/library/MD-UA-RO\\_PrutDeclaration\\_Final\\_20102023.pdf](https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/images/pdf/library/MD-UA-RO_PrutDeclaration_Final_20102023.pdf)

ADI first meeting – January 2024

Link: <https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/54-eap-region/396-january-2024-news.html>

### **7.1.5. Ukraine**

Launch of the Public participation process for 9 RBMPs in Ukraine

<https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/34-ukraine/317-nine-draft-river-basin-management-plans-for-ukraine.html>

Adoption of eight Ukrainian RBMPs

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/34-ukraine/400-ukraine-adopts-eight-river-basin-management-plans-a-major-milestone-towards-sustainable-water-management.html>

Summary leaflets for each RBMP

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/34-ukraine/408-summary-factsheets-on-9-ukrainian-river-basin-management-plans-now-available-in-ukrainian-and-english.html>

[https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/images/pdf/Summary%20factsheets/english/Full%20Pack\\_eng\\_compressed\\_reduced.pdf](https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/images/pdf/Summary%20factsheets/english/Full%20Pack_eng_compressed_reduced.pdf)

Note on the first Ukrainian RBMPs

[https://davr.gov.ua/fls18/EN\\_Conclud-note\\_RBMPs\\_UA\\_20241129.pdf](https://davr.gov.ua/fls18/EN_Conclud-note_RBMPs_UA_20241129.pdf)

## **7.2. Methodologies and Capacity building**

### **7.2.1. Moldova – Nitrates Workshops**

Nitrates Workshop – 2 July 2024

<https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/33-republic-of-moldova/361-workshop-in-moldova-discusses-eu-directive-on-protecting-water-from-nitrate-pollution-from-agriculture.html>

Nitrates Workshop – 14 December 2023

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/33-republic-of-moldova/310-moldova-discusses-implementation-of-eu-nitrates-directive.html>

### **7.2.2. Ukraine – Methodological and Training Activities**

Assessment of war damages on water and ecosystems

<https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/34-ukraine/334-the-toll-of-two-years-of-war-on-water-damage-and-needs-assessment-in-ukraine-s-water-sector.html>

Two-day national training workshop – 5–6 September 2023

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/34-ukraine/281-intensive-training-boosts-river-basin-management-plans-in-ukraine-2.html>

## 7.3. Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) Products and Workshops

### 7.3.1. *NBS Concept Notes*

Riparian Forest Restoration for Water Resources Protection in Moldova

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/resource-library-hidden/51-republic-of-moldova/412-riparian-forest-restoration-for-water-resources-protection-in-moldova-concept-note.html>

Bringing Back Nature in the Kura Delta (Azerbaijan)

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/images/pdf/library%20/EU4ENV AZ Note Bring Back Nature Kura Delta 20230412.pdf>

Hajigabul Lake NbS Concept Note (Azerbaijan)

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/resource-library-hidden/49-azerbaijan/331-hajigabul-lake-nature-based-solution-concept-note.html>

### 7.3.2. *NBS Catalogue*

Catalogue of Nature-Based Solutions for Water Management (available in all EaP languages)

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/54-eap-region/395-new-catalogue-of-nature-based-solutions-for-improved-water-management-in-eastern-partnership-countries.html>

### 7.3.3. *Regional Workshops*

Regional online NbS Workshop – 6 July 2023

<https://www.eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/54-eap-region/268-nature-based-solutions-revitalizing-river-basins-in-eastern-partner-countries-insights-of-the-eu4environment-water-and-data-regional-online-workshop-on-july-6th.html>

Second online Regional NbS Workshop – 30 October 2024

<https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/54-eap-region/395-new-catalogue-of-nature-based-solutions-for-improved-water-management-in-eastern-partnership-countries.html>



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