

The Water Data Centre and case study on water accounts in the Republic of Moldova

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ABSTRACT: The role of **water resources statistics** is obvious, as one of the main means of studying and assessing ecological problems linked to the state of natural water resources, to help define governmental policies, and provide guidance for the reform and development of government bodies responsible for environmental protection. In the Republic of Moldova, one of the actual problems lies in the security of water supply, which has become a national problem due to a deficit of water resources, accentuated by internal and external factors leading to pollution of water resources. It has become particularly critical after Moldova signed the International Conventions and now has to fulfill its obligations.

On July 1998 a pilot study on water resources accounts started within the TACIS environment statistics project, steered by Eurostat, Ifen, (the French Environment Institute) being the principal operator. During the study period data collection and the compilation of the first experimental water accounts tables were organized. This activity was carried out in connection with the drafting of the SEEA2003. The study demonstrated the existence of an important amount of statistics and the possibility to use them for assessing the availability and use of water resources. As well, it highlighted the weak areas of water resources statistics: lack of data on the water resources potential; unreliable data on the situation, use and disposal; insufficient implementation of modern methods of ecological accounting; lack of a database.

The water accounting techniques were a tool for identifying gaps and a basis for deciding on rational solutions to overcome them: the improvement of current surveys (combining surveys, samplings, modelling and water accounts), the development of sampling surveys, and the development of the monitoring networks and/or the use of hydrological models. In every case, it was based on a close inter-institutional co-operation, involving scientists and policy makers.

Understanding of the users needs created the inter-institutional information network, the "Water Data Center", which nowadays is acting and settled under the authority of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources.