



Government of the Netherlands



EXPERT SCOPING WORKSHOP ON QUANTIFYING THE BENEFITS OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION

6-7 June 2013
VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Information notice

The Expert Scoping Workshop on quantifying the benefits of transboundary water cooperation is organized in the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), with the support of the Governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland and the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

I. Background

There is a growing demand by countries for quantitative information on the benefits of different activities in the area of transboundary water cooperation. In the last decades, there has been considerable progress in cooperation on managing transboundary waters, particularly in the pan-European region. However, transboundary water cooperation still often focuses on a restricted vision of water management, and there is scope for further cooperation around transboundary water. Indeed, the extent to which countries are willing to engage into cooperation is the consequence of the perceptions by each country on the potential benefits of cooperation.

The UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) is starting to develop work to address the demand for improved quantitative information on the benefits of transboundary water cooperation. The Water Convention promotes cooperation on transboundary surface water and groundwater, and strengthens their reasonable and equitable use and sustainable management. The Water Convention recognizes that water is a cornerstone of societies and promotes a holistic approach to cooperation, looking at environmental, social and economic implications of water use. To support this vision, the full breadth of cooperative benefits needs to be explored, understood and quantified (including the cost of non-action).

Recognizing the need to support countries to identify and quantify the benefits of transboundary cooperation, the Parties to the Water Convention have included in their programme of work 2013-2015 an area on “Quantifying the Benefits of Transboundary Cooperation”. The work on benefits is of particular importance in the process of the opening of the Water Convention, following the entry into force on 6 February 2013 of the amendments allowing accession to the Convention to all United Nations Member States.

The work on benefits aims to develop guidance on how to identify and quantify the benefits of transboundary cooperation. It is expected that this activity will drive the reflection on the opportunities for further broadening cooperation, preventing conflicts and promoting sustainability and peace through water cooperation. Building on existing studies in this field as well as on the direct experience of the Parties to the Convention and other stakeholders, the work under the Convention will:

- (i) Develop an approach for identifying and quantifying the benefits of cooperation (through the Expert Scoping Workshop to be organized in June 2013)
- (ii) Gather and share practical experiences in identifying and quantifying benefits (through a dedicated workshop to be organized in May 2014)
- (iii) Produce a *Guidance Note* on identifying and quantifying the benefits of cooperation (to be completed by September 2015, for approval by the next Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention).

The Expert Scoping Workshop is therefore the first activity under the area of work on benefits.

II. Objectives

The aim of the Expert Scoping Workshop is to initiate a technical discussion on the approaches and methods of quantifying the economic, social, environmental and political benefits of cooperation.

The specific objectives of the Expert Scoping Workshop are:

- To develop a definition of cooperation in the context of transboundary water management, as the starting point to identify the benefits of transboundary water cooperation
- To identify a typology of benefits
- To discuss existing approaches and methods for the quantification of the typology of benefits identified
- To discuss what characteristics should the *Guidance Note* have in order to be most useful to the Parties to the Convention and other actors as a tool to promote further transboundary water cooperation

III. Participation

The Expert Scoping Workshop will bring together expert academics and practitioners in the field of transboundary cooperation and water related goods and services. Country officials involved in promoting and managing transboundary water cooperation, representatives from joint bodies such as transboundary water commissions, representatives from international organizations (including development banks), as well as academics, private sector, civil society and other independent experts will be represented. The target number of participants is 30.

Limited funds are available for eligible experts providing an active contribution to the Expert Scoping Workshop. Request for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE Secretariat as soon as possible and in any case no later than 3 May 2013.

IV. Organization of work

A detailed agenda will be sent to participants in due course. It is expected that the workshop will be organized around the following issues:

First Day

- Understanding the demand for the work on benefits
- Defining cooperation in a transboundary context
- Defining a typology of benefits
- Discuss existing methodologies to quantify benefits

Second Day

- Discuss existing methodologies to quantify benefits (cont'd)
- Learning from existing experiences in the application of the methodologies
- Discussing what the *Guidance Note* should aim to accomplish, in view of the current state of affairs as regards methodologies and practical experiences
- Discussing what should be next steps for the project

Discussions at the Expert Scoping Workshop will be supported by a Background Document. This document will be shared with participants before the Workshop.

Selected participants will deliver formal presentations to inform the discussions in the different working sessions. All participants will be invited to contribute actively to the discussions.

V. Practical information

The workshop will start at 9.00 a.m. on 6 June 2013 and end at 5.00 p.m. on 7 June 2013. The working languages will be English only.

The meeting will be held in the VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Participants eligible for financial support should send their registration (and if relevant their nomination) to the UNECE secretariat (cammile.marcelo@unece.org) by 3 May 2013. Requests received after this deadline will not be processed.

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the UNECE secretariat (cammile.marcelo@unece.org) as soon as possible. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a Schengen visa is 15 working days. Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to initiate visa procedures at least three weeks before the meeting.

Participants are requested to confirm their attendance at their earliest convenience by completing the registration form available online at http://www.unece.org/env/water/1st_Workshop_Benefits_Cooperation.html and transmitting it to the UNECE secretariat by e-mail (cammile.marcelo@unece.org) as soon as possible.

Further information and material will be made available on the following website in due course: http://www.unece.org/env/water/1st_Workshop_Benefits_Cooperation.html

VI. Contact information

For organization of work and substantial enquiries:

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For the practical arrangements and administrative issues related to travel and visa support:

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