How the Water Convention promotes transboundary water cooperation on the ground

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Implementing the UNECE Water Convention

A sound legal framework coupled with action to support implementation and transboundary water cooperation:

• Projects & capacity building to support accession and implementation
• Continuously evolving to adapt to changing conditions and to respond to countries demand
• Catalyst for cooperation, sustainable platform for follow-up of long-term projects and processes
• Participation of Parties and non-Parties
• Cooperation with numerous UN agencies, NGOs and other partners

→ A Programme of Work adopted every 3 years
→ A number of guidance documents and tools developed
Programme of work for 2016-2018

Support to implementation and application

Opening, promotion and partnerships

European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

Identifying, assessing and communicating the benefits of transboundary water cooperation

Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins
Identifying, assessing and communicating the benefits of transboundary cooperation

Policy Guidance Note on the benefits of transboundary water cooperation: Identification, Assessment and Communication
... to support governments and other actors in realizing the potential benefits of transboundary water cooperation

- Policy Guidance Note to be applied in interested pilot basins
- Workshop to exchange experiences in 2017 or 2018
  → Foster improvement of cooperation by highlighting potential to generate broad range of benefits & contributing to reflection on possible accession to the Convention
Water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus in transboundary basins

Reconciling resource uses in transboundary basins: assessment of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus
... contains results of nexus assessments (describes characteristics of the resources and their governance, beneficial response actions)

- Apply the methodology developed and carry out nexus assessments in transboundary basins
- Stock-taking workshop on 6-7 December 2016
  → Identify opportunities for intersectoral synergies & determine measures to reconcile multiple sectors’ needs of riparian countries for common resources to foster transboundary water cooperation
Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

*Water and Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins: Lessons Learned and Good Practices*

... to illustrate important steps & lessons learned / good practices when developing climate change adaptation strategy for water management in basin or transboundary context

- Pilot projects on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins
- Exchange of experience: global network of basins and global workshops on climate change

→ Support countries and basins in cooperating in climate change adaptation and mitigation across borders
Opening, promotion and partnerships

- Promote accession by raising awareness about Convention & develop capacity to implement its provisions
- Synergies with the UN Watercourses Convention & other multilateral legal instruments on water
- Promote the Convention, activities and guidelines
- Cooperate with partners

→ Raise awareness on the Water Convention, support accession and build capacity for its implementation for non-Parties
→ Promote exchange of experience with other regions of the world
Support to implementation through soft law development

- Water pollution by hazardous substances (1994)
- Water pollution from fertilizers, pesticides (1995)
- Licensing of wastewater discharges (1996)
- Sustainable flood prevention (2000)
- Safety of pipelines (2006)
- Payments for ecosystem services (2007)
- Transboundary flood management (2007)
- Safety of tailing management facilities (2009)
- Water and adaptation to climate change (2009)
- Guide to Implementing the Water Convention (2009)
- Transboundary groundwaters (2012)
- Principles for effective joint bodies for transboundary water cooperation (2015)
Some lessons learnt

• **Agreements, joint bodies** (commissions etc.) are key to establishment of sustainable transboundary water cooperation

• A constructive **dialogue** and **identification of common interest** among riparians and with partners is necessary

• Establishment of contacts and a necessary basis through **technical cooperation for building trust** among riparian countries - potential for a more political dimension

• Developing effective transboundary cooperation takes time – **long-term engagement** and patience important

• Sharing / solidarity/political willingness essential for progress, and identification of windows of opportunity!