Participatory Water–Energy–Food–Ecosystem Nexus Assessment in Transboundary Basins

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Convention of the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
Nexus assessments under the UNECE Water Convention: the framework for the methodology

• A part of the Programme of Work 2013-2015 under the UNECE Water Convention (a global instrument), adopted by the Parties (some 40); continuation to 2016-2018 endorsed with more basin assessments

• Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus established to guide the work and to provide oversight;

• Demand-driven participatory assessments prepared in close cooperation with and reviewed by the national administrations;

• Meeting of the Parties endorsed the methodology & general conclusions (November 2015)
Aims at the basin level

• Support transboundary cooperation by
  • identifying intersectoral synergies that could be further explored and utilized in the different basins;
  • Determining policy measures and actions that could alleviate negative consequences of the nexus and help to optimize the use of available resources
• Help to move towards increased efficiency in resource use, greater policy coherence and co-management
• Build capacity in addressing intersectoral impacts
Information flow

Analysts

Desk study

1st Workshop

Jointly identified issues and solutions

In-depth analysis of issues and solutions

2nd Workshop

Actions in response to solutions

Authorities and stakeholders

Factual questionnaire
Relevant documentation on the basin

Opinion-based questionnaire

Key policy and strategic documents
Specific information requests
A devoted methodology developed for the Nexus Assessment: 6 Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sectors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Desk study</td>
<td>Identification of basin conditions, socio economics. General. Information normally used to underpin sectoral planning. Key elements include general socio-economic goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Desk study</td>
<td>Identification of key sectors, stakeholders. General. Requires expert judgment understanding of local context, governance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Desk study/ 1st Workshop</td>
<td>Analysis of the key sectors. Individual sector experts and plans. Key elements include identifying resource flows and institutional mapping.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1st Workshop</td>
<td>Identification of intersectoral issues. Sectoral group discussion on interlinkages (input needs, impacts and trade-offs), and discussion on sectoral plans.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1st Workshop</td>
<td>Nexus dialogue and future developments. Agreeing on a prioritization of main interlinkages. Expected changes the interlinkages (trends, uncertainties, drivers).</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1st &amp; 2nd Workshop/Desk study</td>
<td>Identification of opportunities for improvement. Identification of solutions with multiple impacts between sectors, scales and boundaries.</td>
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Participatory process for joint identification of issues and dialogue informed by analysis

Workshop

General basin diagnostic

Conclusions & dissemination

Quantification of selected priority issues & solutions

Indicator-based analysis

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Applicability and advantages

• Adapts to the context and the issues specific to the basin
• A non-prescriptive, inclusive and indicative approach — provides a good basis for identifying cooperation opportunities
• Application to 5 transboundary basins so far demonstrates value for engaging different sectors into a dialogue (the Alazani/Ganykh, Sava, Syr Darya, Isonzo/Soča, Drina)
• Initial identification of issues, analysis by fit-for-purpose tools
Challenges and limitations

• Diverse expectations concerning what the assessment can provide

• Limited resources constrain ambitions — especially to have a more interactive process, or to coordinate more actively with the countries and experts

• Dealing with the complexity requires a workable approach, gradually improved

• A scoping level exercise! Follow-up projects needed if more in-depth analysis and quantification are to be done

• NO one-size-fits-all: all the basins are unique the application of the general approach and the process shapes differently.

• Active participation and commitment needed from the countries to shape the approach into a valuable, relevant exercise that supports policy and decisions at different levels