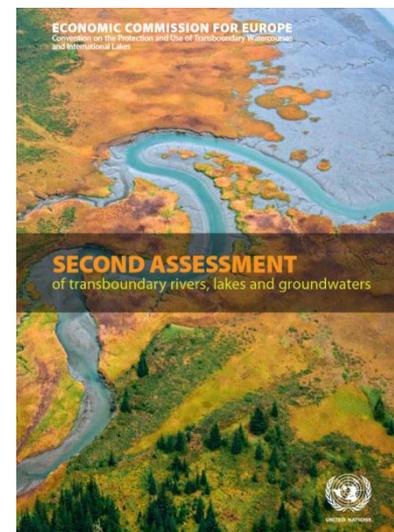


Background to the assessments
under the Water Convention:
scope of the Second
Assessment, lessons learned
and preliminary thinking about
the Third Assessment

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Background to assessments under the Water Convention

- * Among the Convention's obligations: Carry out at regular intervals joint or coordinated assessments of the conditions of transboundary waters and the effectiveness of measures taken (Art 11)
- * In 2003 the Parties to the Water Convention decided to regularly carry out regional assessments: First Assessment in 2007, Second Assessment in 2011



Rationale and benefits of comprehensive assessments

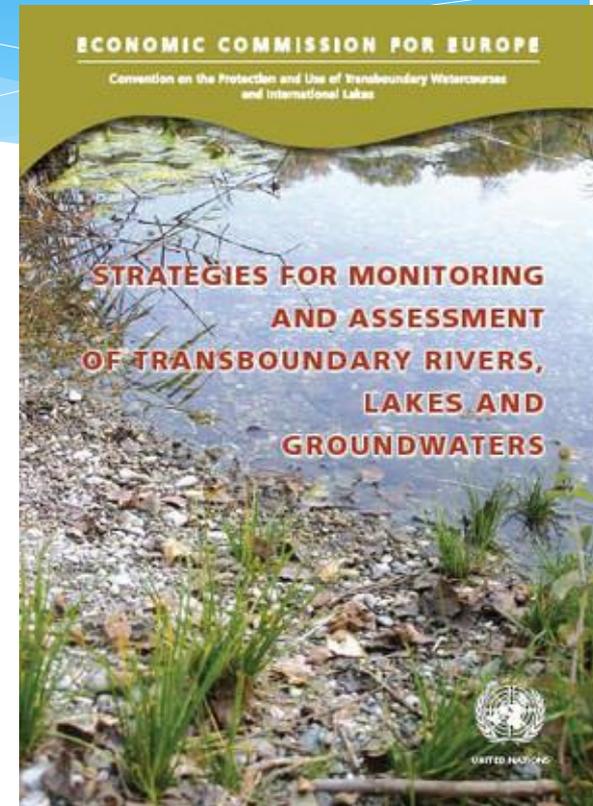
- * **Keep the status of waters under scrutiny**, to define a baseline & measure long-term progress.
- * **Support cooperation, management of transboundary waters & application/implementation of the Convention.** Coordinated or joint assessments have traditionally been the basis for developing cooperation. This is particularly useful in basins where there is no joint institution.
- * **Promote exchange of experience and good practices, capacity-building, progressive harmonization, promoting cooperation, through both political and technical dialogue**
- * Convene Parties, non-Parties (including potential will-be Parties) and others to **discuss about emerging challenges in managing transboundary waters and possible responses.** Non-Parties have also conveyed their issues & shape the assessment ->Global coverage is therefore in line with the Convention's opening
- * **Inform work and activities** under the Convention and of other actors supporting transboundary water cooperation
- * Assessments of the status of waters and trends (pressure-impact relationships) **complement the reporting** under the Convention (national legislation and measures, cooperation)
- * The main **added value** compared to other initiatives: the focus on transboundary waters, the intergovernmental nature and the joint/participatory process (i.e. not a desk or expert study)

Monitoring and assessment under the Water Convention

Among the Water Convention's **obligations for Riparian Parties elaboration of joint monitoring programmes concerning water quality and quantity**

Monitoring and assessment guidelines: for rivers & lakes (1996); groundwaters (2000); **Strategies for monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters (2006)**

Application of the guidelines was supported by **pilot projects** which in the 1990s & early 2000s helped to upgrade monitoring cooperation and information exchange practices



Second Assessment under the Water Convention

Second assessment (2011) provided a comprehensive, up-to-date overview of the status of transboundary waters in the European and Asian parts of the UNECE region

- * More than 150 transboundary rivers, 40 lakes , some 200 transboundary groundwaters & 25 Ramsar sites or other wetlands of transboundary importance assessed in close cooperation with the national administrations.*
- * Capacity building: subregional workshops, exchanges & self-assessment*
- * Serves to inform, guide and stimulate further action by different actors*
- * Great partnership: Ramsar, GWP-Med, IWAC, UNEP-GRID Europe, IGRAC, basin commissions, donors etc*
- * Identification of gaps, issues on which there is poor information*
- * Active participation: also non-UNECE countries & non-Parties*



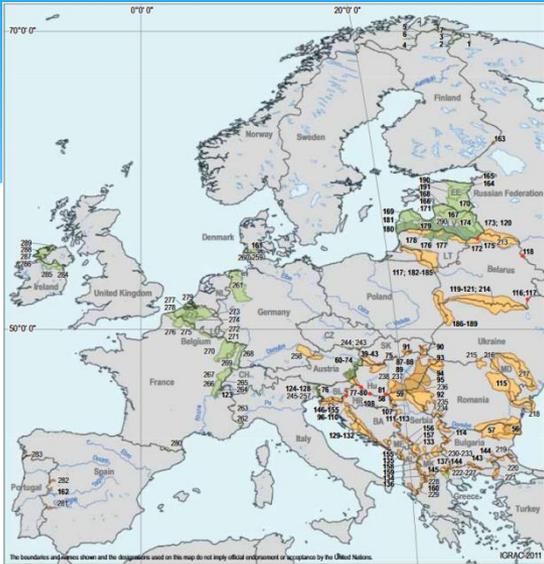
Process of the Second Assessment

- * Intergovernmental process based on information by countries: datasheets on basins; drafts reviewed & discussed at the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment; endorsement by the Meeting of the Parties and discussed at the 7th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference
- * Subregional focus, reflected in the organization of the process (5 sub-regional workshops) & structure of the report
- * Collective effort by Parties and non-Parties to the Water Convention, and countries outside the UNECE region
- * Inputs by joint bodies (river and lake commissions)
- * Inputs on wetlands of transboundary significance from Ramsar experts

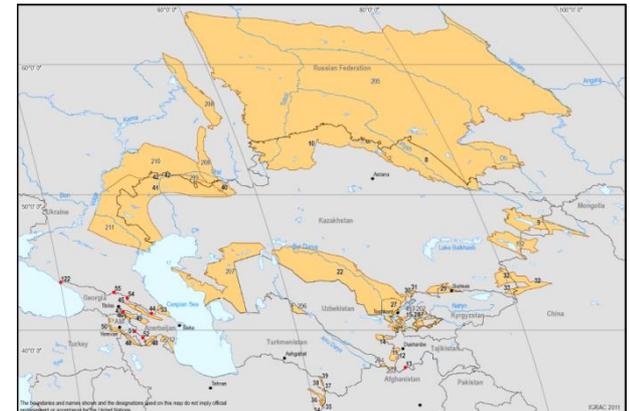
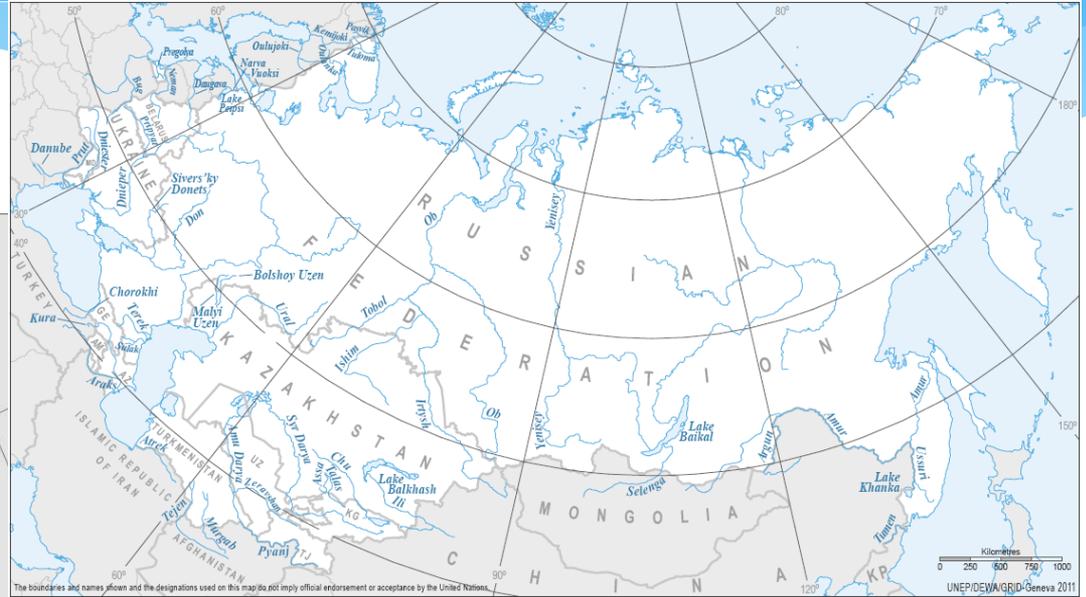
Information in the Second Assessment

- * Based on the DPSIR framework (Driving forces, Pressures, Status, Impact, Responses)
 - * Surface and groundwater resources: **distribution** among the riparian countries within a basin/aquifer. Integration of groundwater and surface water information.
 - * **Pressures** and their importance (water uses, polluting activities, diversion etc)
 - * **Quality and quantity status** of transboundary watercourses
 - * Transboundary **impacts**
 - * **Cooperation**: joint bodies, agreements, joint monitoring etc
 - * **Trends**
 - * **Response measures** taken

Transboundary surface waters and groundwaters



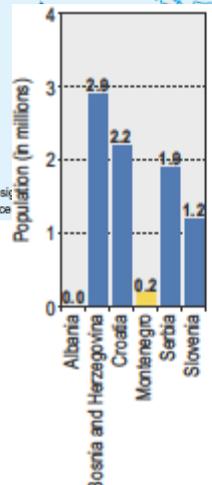
Transboundary surface waters and groundwaters



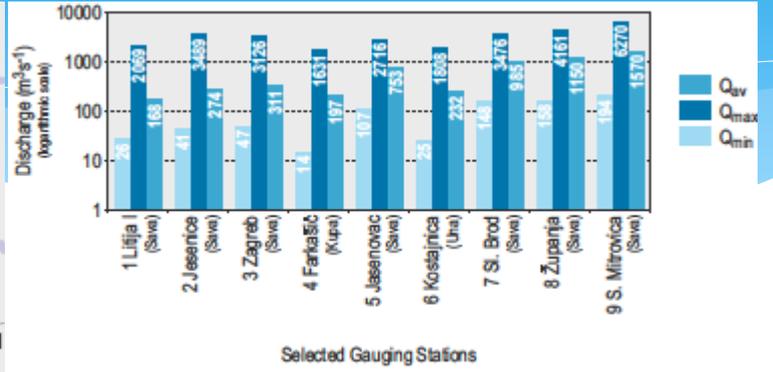
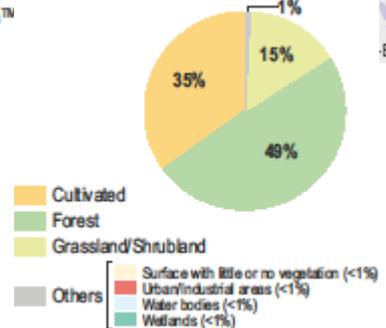
Basin assessments



The boundaries and names shown and the designations do not imply official endorsement or acceptance.



Basin report
LandScan™



- * An overview of Driving forces, Pressures, Status, Impact, Responses
- * Quantity and quality of water resources, including groundwaters and wetlands
- * Trends
- * Etc.

Lessons learned and recommendations

- * **Optimizing the information collection** - Finding good balance between use of data from international sources vs. countries and between quantitative vs. qualitative information. How much can the basin/aquifer assessments be harmonized while still reflecting the diversity in terms of existing approaches and monitoring systems (comparison of water quality data a challenge; different concepts e.g. aquifers vs. groundwater bodies)? Intersectoral coordination at national level affects data availability. Spatial information (maps) should be prepared more in parallel with the assessment to support the analysis
- * The **process** is as important as the final product for political and technical dialogue, capacity building & exchange of experiences. It is particularly useful for basins without agreements or joint bodies.
- * **Strategic partnerships** needed, for expertise, for geographical coverage, for the participatory process.

What features to shape the process, taking into account the lessons learned?

- * The **burden of information collection should be minimized**: How to complement official sources with supporting information?
- * How far **beyond descriptive** can we go about e.g. quantity and quality status? Higher ambition requires a further harmonized approach and/or more use of global data sources (including modelled ones). If necessary, differentiate with a ladder approach i.e. offering lower and higher information requirement options
- * Seek to assess the **impact of the Convention and of cooperation**, if possible
- * **Provide convening power for initiating a dialogue among co-riparians**
- * **An effective modality for working** with regional commissions and/or global partners has to be found
- * **Balance** to be struck **between a consistent approach and reflecting the specificities** of the sub-regions -> setting a minimum common level for information or having a tiered approach?
- * **Meaningful links to other processes** (as appropriate): reporting under the Convention, WFD/EU Directives related reporting, SDGs' monitoring', possibly UNEP/GEMS water and GEO

Current thinking about the format and geographical scope (to be discussed in the Expert Meeting)

Main components: desk study, questionnaire, workshops

Proposed geographic scope: Selected/volunteered basins from the UNECE region and beyond

Approach to selection: All Parties will be invited, and all other countries are welcome subject to their interest

Possible modes of targeted invitations:

1. Review of the basins from the 2nd Assessment: a priority set formed, in consultation with the countries, considering certain criteria (Expert Group to develop): e.g. size/importance/representativeness (in terms of e.g. type of waters, climate, management challenges), changes observed or occurring
2. For regions outside UNECE:
 - Countries with interest to participate (in particular countries in the process of accession)
---> co-riparian countries also to be invited
 - Interested basin organizations and regional organizations
 - Regional commissions and regional organizations to drive / play a role and consult countries in their region and to make related proposals
3. The set of basins included should allow highlighting good examples of cooperation and its impact. Basins in which major changes have / are occurring should be featured.

Timeline

- * **Expert group** to map the links to other relevant processes and the possible information sources to be considered, propose a process, and to develop a draft structure, outline and scope for discussion in the Working Group(s). Meeting 9-10 May 2017 to provide the elements.
- * **Consultation of/guidance from the IWRM WG** (5-6 July 2017) on the basis of the conclusions from the Expert Group
- * Integration of comments, gap filling, enquiries with potentially interested countries, joint bodies and partners
- * **21-22 February 2018:** Meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment convened to review the concept and refine it, with the close involvement of countries / basins potentially involved
- * **Elaborated concept & process for consideration by IWRM in 30-31 May 2018**
- * **Final decision by the Meeting of the Parties in October 2018, including list of basins included.**
- * **Report not before 2021** (timeline to be detailed when the related processes, resource contributions etc. more clear)