Frequently Asked Questions About the Conventions

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Frequently asked questions

• Why do we have two conventions related to transboundary waters?
  • UN Watercourses Convention evolved through work of UN General Assembly and International Law Commission. Slow to enter into force (1997-2014)
  • UNECE Water Convention originally drafted as regional instrument but recognition of its global relevance steadily growing since early 2000s

• Which one is better?
  • At their core they both say the same thing – cooperate over transboundary waters!
  • Some details missing from one convention can be found in the other
  • Accession two both therefore offers a fuller set of legal rules and principles

• Should I wait for my neighbour to accede?
  • Conventions have acted as a catalyst and basis for negotiation
  • Demonstrates commitment to international water law (lead by example)
  • A party is not required to implement Convention with riparian countries that are not parties
  • Platform and common language by which to share experiences across basins and regions
• **Will the conventions replace the agreements I already have?**
  - No. Both instruments are framework instruments. States can use the Conventions as a basis to revise/adopt more specific arrangements at the basin/sub-basin level.
  - There is a lot of diversity in the types of arrangements that the parties to both Conventions have entered into. No one size fits all.

• **Which countries benefit more – upstream or downstream?**
  - Both instruments reflect compromise text from upstream and downstream states (and midstream, and those that are both upstream and downstream, and...)
  - Transboundary impacts can travel both ways.
  - Predictability is good for all States.
  - Cooperation can bring benefits beyond water.

• **Will I win the Stockholm Water Prize if I can get my country to accede to the Conventions?**
Thanks!