

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a dense, green forest. The river is the central focus, with a sandy and rocky bank on the left. The surrounding forest is thick and vibrant green, with some rocky outcrops visible on the right bank.

Global workshop

MOVING FORWARD
TRANSBOUNDARY
WATER COOPERATION

building on its benefits

How a dialogue focusing on benefits
can facilitate transboundary water
cooperation

Main messages from the Policy Guidance Note on the Benefits of transboundary water cooperation

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#WaterConvention

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Photo: Ben den Engelsen

Rationale for focusing on the benefits of transboundary water cooperation

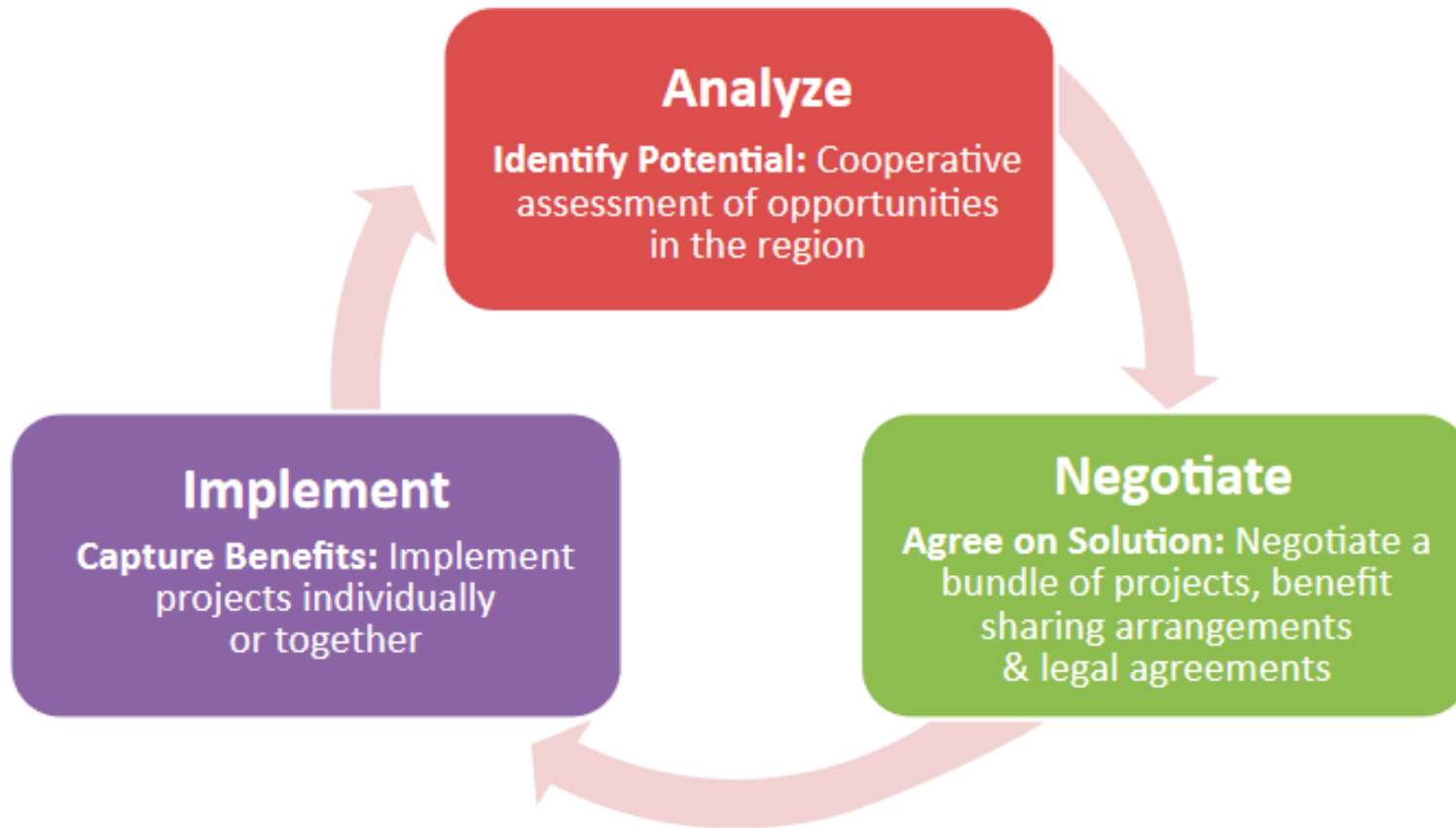
- Transboundary water cooperation: a potential to generate broad range of significant benefits for cooperating countries
 - Economic growth, increased human well-being, enhanced environmental sustainability and increased political stability
- Focusing on benefits can provide fact-based arguments for starting up cooperation or developing stronger cooperation
- Possibility to increase cooperation: moving from “sharing water” → “sharing the benefits of water” → “realizing the broader benefits of cooperation”

 Benefit assessment exercise can help countries to realize the potential benefits of cooperation

Work under the Water Convention: why to focus on the benefits of cooperation

- Strengthening of international water law → more countries aligning with principle of cooperation but only when:
 - net benefits cooperation > net benefits non cooperation
 - distribution of benefits perceived as fair
- Demand of the Water Convention to cooperate by entering into basin agreements and establishing joint bodies: an important basis for involved countries to identify, assess and communicate the benefits of cooperation

Transboundary water cooperation: a cyclical process



Benefits of cooperation likely to evolve over time as cooperation opens up new options to address emerging challenges

<i>Stage of development of the transboundary water cooperation policy process</i>	<i>Needs of the transboundary water cooperation policy process</i>	<i>Focus of the benefit assessment exercise</i>
Pre-initial stage (e.g. basins characterized by political conflict)	Establish the conditions for launching a cooperation process	Identification of mutually beneficial opportunities from shared water resources
Initial stage (e.g. basins without an international agreement or transboundary coordination body)	Launch of the cooperation process, supported by awareness-raising on the need to cooperate	Identification of the full range of the benefits of cooperation
Intermediate stage (e.g. negotiations on an agreement ongoing or basins with an international agreement, but without a transboundary coordination body)	Consolidation of the cooperation process through negotiations, strategic planning and the implementation of basic cooperation initiatives (e.g. information sharing)	Broad assessment of the range of benefits of cooperation (including cost of non-cooperation)
Advanced stage (e.g. basins with an international agreement and a transboundary coordination body)	Realization of the potential benefits of cooperation through the implementation of advanced cooperation initiatives (e.g. infrastructure projects, coordinated management instruments)	Assessment of the benefits of independent national projects, joint projects, or a basin programme of measures