Regional cooperation: Scoping the Benefits of transboundary water cooperation in the NWSAS basin

Development of a Policy Brief

Deuxième Atelier Régional SASS
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Why looking at the benefits of transboundary water cooperation?

• Countries sharing water resources **naturally reflect on what benefits cooperation can bring**
• A benefit assessment exercise (identification, assessment and communication) can help countries to:
  • **fully realize the potential benefits of cooperation**
  • Provide **fact-based argument** for finding opportunities to develop stronger cooperation (moving from perception to facts)
  • **Broaden the scope** of cooperation by defining a “benefit cluster”
  • **Attract financial resources** to implement water cooperation solutions

• A constructive **dialogue** and **identification of common interest** among riparians and with partners is necessary
• Sharing / solidarity / political **willingness** essential for progress, and identification of **windows of opportunity**
Identifying the benefits of cooperation: approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of benefits</th>
<th>Benefits for economic activities</th>
<th>Benefits beyond economic activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved water management</strong></td>
<td><strong>Economic benefits</strong>&lt;br&gt;Expanded activity and productivity in economic sectors (aquaculture, irrigated agriculture, mining, energy generation, industrial production, nature-based tourism)&lt;br&gt;Reduced cost of carrying out productive activities&lt;br&gt;Reduced economic impacts of water-related hazards (floods, droughts)&lt;br&gt;Increased value of property</td>
<td><strong>Social and environmental benefits</strong>&lt;br&gt;Health impacts from improved water quality and reduced risk of water-related disasters.&lt;br&gt;Employment and reduced poverty impacts of the economic benefits&lt;br&gt;Improved access to services (such as electricity and water supply)&lt;br&gt;Improved satisfaction due to preservation of cultural resources or access to recreational opportunities.&lt;br&gt;Increased ecological integrity and reduced habitat degradation and biodiversity loss&lt;br&gt;Strengthened scientific knowledge on water status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhanced trust</strong></td>
<td><strong>Regional economic cooperation benefits</strong>&lt;br&gt;Development of regional markets for goods, services and labour&lt;br&gt;Increase in cross-border investments&lt;br&gt;Development of transnational infrastructure networks</td>
<td><strong>Peace and security benefits</strong>&lt;br&gt;Strengthening of international law&lt;br&gt;Increased geopolitical stability and strengthened diplomatic relations&lt;br&gt;New opportunities from increased trust (joint initiatives and investments)&lt;br&gt;Reduced risk and avoided cost of conflict and savings from reduced military spending&lt;br&gt;Creation of a shared basin identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use typology to identify the broad range of benefits and frame them in terms of development outcomes (benefits for the people and sectors...)
Assessing the benefits of cooperation: lessons learned from 3 basins

Drina River Basin

Sio Malaba Malakisi River Basin

Okavongo Cubango River Basin
**Example**

**Benefits of transboundary water cooperation in the Cubango Okavango River Basin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECONOMIC BENEFITS</th>
<th>SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Strong expansion of tourism sector</td>
<td>• Employment creation in tourism and related sectors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Modest expansion of agricultural activities, particularly fishing</td>
<td>• Improved livelihoods and poverty reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Land use improvement</td>
<td>• Food security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Foreign exchange from tourism sector</td>
<td>• Water transport and recreation benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Projects in the fields of energy, irrigation and water</td>
<td>• Improvement of drinking water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduced costs of natural disasters due to early warning</td>
<td>• Community cohesion and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased land value along the river</td>
<td>• Exposure to and appreciation of other cultures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION</th>
<th>PEACE AND SECURITY BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Investments in research</td>
<td>• Conflict avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Investments in road infrastructure</td>
<td>• Increased collaboration in anti-poaching, border controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased transboundary tourism</td>
<td>• Support from the three countries for World Heritage Site declaration of Okavango Delta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhancement of bilateral relationships</td>
<td>• Cultural exchange visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased transborder commercial trade</td>
<td>• Agreement about a shared vision based on a shared identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing of expertise on water management, sustainable tourism, and agri-business.</td>
<td>• Increased security thanks to rapid alert systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Part of a UNECE Nexus Assessment (with ISRBC)**

Discussion of benefits of actions in priority nexus areas: co-optimizing flow regulation, promoting rural development and protecting water quality

**Brought up cross-sectoral cooperation opportunities**, for example, with the energy sector

Contributed to the design of the project under preparation and funded by the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)

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**In parallel to Multi Sectoral Investment Opportunities Assessment project (World Bank, OKACOM)**

Better understanding and **basin vision** (vs national visions) **of the benefits** of cooperation, incl. on the benefits of OKACOM

Inform **better implementation** of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP)

Now looking at opportunities for **generating benefits** derived from **specific (joint) actions** and sharing/distributing such benefits through cooperation vs. historical and status quo

**Consider expanding mandate** of OKACOM to include other government ministries & agencies (finance, planning and economic development)

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**Basin // regional components of a project to strengthen cooperation in IGAD region (IGAD, OES, IUCN, UNECE)**

Joint identification of past and prospective benefits of cooperation (adoption of a broader view)

**SMM Basin Investment Framework** to promote and guide investments of transboundary significance in the SMM Basin endorsed

4 **prioritized** clusters of investment projects

**Revised MoU** for joint management of SMM basin under development

**Joint Working Group** officially nominated to discuss possible future institutional framework
Lessons learned for understanding and increasing the benefits of transboundary water cooperation

• Importance of developing a “basin perception” of benefits of cooperation

• Need to involve **multiple stakeholders** from different sectors

• Possible confusion **Outputs** (achievements) of cooperation process vs **Benefits** (development outcomes - past and prospective) of TWC

• Focus on benefits and beneficiaries, but also on **costs of inaction**

• It is useful to elicit **perceptions** of stakeholders, to look at the **historical evolution** of benefits, and to consider the counter-factual (what would be the **current situation without past cooperation**?)

• Work on benefits of cooperation can help **prioritizing and facilitating investments** of mutual interest

• Importance of **communicating the benefits** of cooperation at different scales (national-level stakeholders, basin populations...), also key to ensuring support and financing of cooperation processes
Transboundary water cooperation in the NWSAS basin: what has happened so far?

• 3 countries are overall cooperating as good neighbors since a long time!

• 2006 Declaration: Establishment of the Consultation Mechanism

• Numerous successful joint work streams and interventions

• Moving from joint projects to a permanent platform of concertation

• Ongoing: discussion on intensifying the cooperation under the Mechanism
Policy brief on the benefits of transboundary cooperation in the NWSAS basin

Why?

Show in a clear way how cooperation has benefitted the countries - inspire additional cooperative actions to improve the sustainable development of the NWSAS basin for the benefits of the 3 riparian countries, in their efforts to meeting Sustainable Development Goals also in the context of climate change

For whom?

Decision-makers in the 3 countries (at different levels) who have a role to play in transboundary water management

See your printouts for more details on the policy brief structure and content
Policy brief on the benefits of transboundary cooperation in the NWSAS basin

Main elements of the brief that we will discuss today:

1. Main achievements, impacts and benefits generated so far by transboundary water cooperation through the work of the Consultation Mechanism (chapter 2)

2. The added-value of implementing a Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystem Nexus approach to transboundary water cooperation and possible additional benefits that can be generated in the basin through it (chapter 3)

3. Prospective benefits from enhancing the NWSAS Consultation Mechanism, looking at opportunities arising from increased cooperation (chapter 4)

→ We need your expertise and experience! So, 3 discussion rounds, one on each topic
1. Achievements of transboundary water cooperation so far

- 2006 Declaration: Establishment of **Consultation Mechanism** (2008)
- Establishment of **Steering Committee, regular meetings & continuous work of the Coordination Unit** (incl. provision of staff and finance)
- Development of **database & model** (Information System), incl. local sub-models; used as basis for **planning activities** for water authorities
- **Data exchange**, standardization & repeated tripartite technical trainings and workshops - enhanced **technical capacities**
- **Consensus on status of the resource** established
- **Mapping** of vulnerable & high potential zones & salinization
- **Donor grant** leverage due to credible cooperation
- Production of several hydrologic, socio-economic & ecological studies, pilot projects (under SASS III) including recommendations on **irrigation practices & dissemination**
1. Existing benefits for the 3 countries (preliminary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic benefits:</th>
<th>Environmental benefits:</th>
<th>Social benefits:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Increased agricultural production</td>
<td>• Awareness and knowledge of sensitive ecosystems/ vulnerable zones (e.g. inventory &amp; analysis wetland ecosystems)</td>
<td>• Reduced rural-urban displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improved farmers’ incomes thanks to higher water productivity in agriculture under pilot projects (SASS III)</td>
<td>• Supporting preservation through avoidance of drilling near e.g. chotts as well as local change of irrigation practices.</td>
<td>• Increased resilience of local communities to basin challenges (incl. climate change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduced costs for each country of knowledge management, capacity building, research and hydrological planning through Coordination Unit’s work and database maintenance (efficiency gains of tripartite effort)</td>
<td>• Avoided cost of misplanning</td>
<td>• Strengthening of the basin identity</td>
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<th>Regional economic benefits:</th>
<th>Governance benefits:</th>
<th>Peace and security benefits:</th>
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<td>• Regional markets for agricultural products (?)</td>
<td>• Institutional framework for cooperation enables concerted management of NWSAS</td>
<td>• Mutual trust developed through the process of cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improvement of national policies</td>
<td>• Contribute to stability by addressing common water scarcity challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Political cooperation through identification of common challenges and solutions</td>
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</table>
Instructions for working group discussions:

• 3 discussions, each lasting 20-25 min;
• Please nominate a rapporteur;
• After the end of all 3 discussions, short (5 min. max) reporting back from each group by the rapporteur.
1. Discussion: Existing benefits of NWSAS water cooperation

• Feedback on elements presented: Achievements + Benefits so far (see policy brief outline)

• Additional detail on the practical use of the joint database & model for taking decisions (at all levels)?

• Additional ideas on benefits achieved?

• Retour d'information sur les éléments présentés: réalisations et avantages à ce jour (voir la structure de la Note)

• Détails supplémentaires sur l'utilisation pratique de la base de données commune et du modèle pour la prise de décision (à tous les niveaux)?

• Idées supplémentaires sur les avantages générés?
2. Added-value of implementing a Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystem Nexus approach to transboundary water cooperation

Main relevant Nexus solution: “Reinforce transboundary cooperation for sustainable groundwater resource management”

Beyond that:

There are various Nexus solutions where transboundary water cooperation can support their implementation, esp. in a coordinated and more cost-effective way. Better integration of other sectors (building linkages with agriculture, energy, environment) can generate additional, tangible benefits.
2. Discussion: Expected benefits of implementing Nexus solutions at transboundary level

• For which Nexus solutions can transboundary water cooperation support implementation? [see printout on the Nexus solutions]

• What benefits do you expect from such a support?

• Pour quelles solutions Nexus la coopération dans le domaine des eaux transfrontières peut-elle soutenir la mise en œuvre? [voir le document avec les solutions Nexus]

• Quels avantages pensez-vous d'un tel soutien peut générer?

Consider the possible types of benefits: Economic benefits; Social benefits; Environmental benefits; Regional economic cooperation; Peace and security benefits; Governance benefits
3. Benefits of a possible enhanced Consultation Mechanism – strengthening transboundary water cooperation

• Discussions among 3 countries underway

• Enhancement could also support the implementation of Nexus solutions
3. Discussion: Benefits of a possible enhanced Consultation Mechanism – strengthening transboundary water cooperation

• Expected additional benefits related to a possible strengthening of the Consultation Mechanism?

• Avantages supplémentaires attendus liés à un éventuel renforcement du mécanisme de concertation?

Consider the possible types of benefits: Economic benefits; Social benefits; Environmental benefits; Regional economic cooperation; Peace and security benefits; Governance benefits