UNECE Water Convention

Water-Forests links

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Convention of the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
The UNECE Water Convention

Signed in 1992, into force 1996, opened to all UN Member States 2016

Objective: to protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating cooperation

The Convention is based on three main pillars:

• Principle of prevention
• Principle of reasonable and equitable utilization
• Principle of cooperation

Support to transboundary water cooperation thanks to:

A sound legal framework

An active institutional framework

Activities and projects on the ground
The Convention’s programme of Work

New programme of Work (2019-2021) adopted by the Meeting of the Parties 10-12 October 2018

Also supports the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030
Integrated and intersectoral (Nexus) approach to TB cooperation. Activities and outcomes

- Engaging different sectors, incl. forestry, into transboundary dialogue
- Ad-hoc participatory assessment methodology – joint identification of issues and solutions
  - fit-for-purpose tools adapts to the context and the specific issues
  - issues and solutions analyzed: technical analysis + governance
- Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus guides the work
- Sustainable natural resources management Nexus Cluster of UNECE
- Publications: Methodology, Approach, RE&Nexus in transboundary context
Integrated and intersectoral (Nexus) approach to TB cooperation. Projects

- **Sava** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Montenegro)
- **Alazani/Ganykh** (Azerbaijan, Georgia)
- **Syr Darya** (Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)
- **Drina** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro)
- **Drin** (Albania, Kosovo*, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro)
- **Isonzo/Soča** (Slovenia, Italy)
- **North West Saharan Aquifer** (Algeria, Tunisia, Libya)

* United Nations administered territory under the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)
Alazani/Ganykh Basin: nexus dynamics around forest ecosystems

RESPONSE NEEDED:

- Energy policy
  - Facilitate access to modern energy sources and energy trade
- Forest management/protection
  - Control illegal wood harvesting

Ecosystem service
- Benefits through reduced erosion, to hydrological regime, to ecosystems
- Reduced impacts from flash floods
Western Balkans: Forests, bioenergy environment, and climate change

• Threatened **environmental assets**
  – Forest degradation is widespread
  – Forests essential for climate mitigation and adaptation

• A closer look to **sustainable bioenergy**?
  – Air pollution a major social issue, deeply linked to energy poverty
  – Biomass often neglected in RE plans; efficiency measures needed

• Need to frame it into **rural development** plans, with:
  – sustainable agriculture
  – eco-tourism
  – distributed REs (including bioenergy)
Drin River Basin (GEF project)

Long-term support to cooperation on IWRM by GWP and UNECE in the Drin Basin in the Western Balkans to foster transboundary cooperation

Main foci

1. Hydropower flow regulation, and flood management
2. Biomass production, forest management, and ecosystem services
3. Agricultural development and trade

Regarding 2, selected questions related to forests to be explored

- Uncontrolled and illegal logging: extent, areas most at risk, the main uses driving logging, the role of energy demand in driving wood consumption.
- The impact of forest degradation on water resources? We are looking for evidence.
- Traditional biomass use vs modern bioenergy. Success stories of value chain modernization in the region?
- Funding mechanisms available to propose sustainable forest management in the region? EU/global/SEE funding available? If yes, is modern bioenergy a clever proposal to put forward?
Enhancing adaptive capacity in the transboundary Dniester and Chu-Talas basins

DNIESTER
Moldova-Ukraine

CHU-TALAS
Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan
Enhancing adaptive capacity in the transboundary Dniester and Chu-Talas basins

Inclusion of forests:

- part of the strategic basin documents on transboundary water management and adaptation to climate change (Chu-Talas TDA and SAP, Dniester Strategic Framework on Adaptation and Implementation Plan);

- Pilot reforestation measures to adapt to climate change (floods, droughts) in the Chu-Talas and Lower Dniester:
  - ecologically valuable and local species;
  - economic benefits for the local population;
  - complemented by awareness activities.
Conclusions

• **Ecosystems approach** inherent to the Water Convention. Reflected in the Programme of Work.

• Links currently mainly related to **adaptation to climate change** and water-food-energy ecosystems **nexus** (basin assessments)

• The Convention’s focal points in ministries responsible for (transboundary) water management: environment, natural resources, agriculture (and forestry). In some activities, a **broader participation** has been sought

• **Sustainable forest management** guidance promoted in the outputs of the relevant projects

• Advice and information from the **Forestry and Timber Section** much appreciated (thanks for the support)

• Subject to interest, there are further cooperation opportunities, e.g.
  – Global workshop on ecosystem-based adaptation (29-30 April) will also consider forest issues
  – Analysis of sustainable biomass development opportunities in the Drin River Basin (2019)