



**Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes**

**Second Joint meeting of the Working Groups on Monitoring and Assessment and on Integrated Water
Resources Management**

**Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management
Thirteenth meeting***

**Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment
Fourteenth meeting***

Geneva, 28-30 May 2018

Item 16 of the provisional agenda

Programme of work for 2019-2021 and preparations for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties

**Proposals for the programme of work for 2019-2021 from different bodies and events under the Water
Convention**

Prepared by the secretariat

Background:

At its 12th meeting, the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (WG-IWRM) decided to develop the programme of work for 2019-21 of the Water Convention through a consultative process that would include a written survey among Parties, non-Parties and partners (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2018/INF.2- ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2018/INF.2), a round of interviews with selected key actors as well as the more traditional discussions on the future programme of work in the Convention's subsidiary bodies (Task Forces and Joint Expert Group).

The present document contains suggestions for future work in the different areas brought forward by participants in the framework of the following meetings and events under the Convention (the lists for each meeting are not filtered or prioritized, but contain all proposals made):

1. Proposals for future work on monitoring and assessment based, among others, on discussions by the Bureau at its 25th meeting (Geneva, 7 July 2017)
2. 5th meeting of the Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus (18 October 2017)
3. Global workshop on water allocation in transboundary basins (16 - 17 October 2017)
4. International Workshop on Water Scarcity: Taking action in transboundary basins and reducing health impacts (11 - 12 December 2017)
5. 9th meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (13 December 2017)
6. Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG) (together with Industrial Accidents Convention)
7. Global workshop on the benefits of transboundary water cooperation (6-7 February 2018)

* Second joint meeting of the two working groups.

1. **Proposals for future work on monitoring and assessment based, among others, on discussions at the Bureau's 25th meeting (Geneva, 7 July 2017)¹**

- a) Further reflection on developing activities could be informed by **a small review covering e.g. the replies regarding the scope and types of monitoring in reporting under the Convention**, complemented by information from e.g. on-going projects of the Convention. An analysis of the current status of monitoring and needs could provide a starting point. Irrespective of the “core” activity to be selected, *an analytical review* could be a useful basis, and possibly an element of presentation of results from the reporting under the Convention/on indicator 6.5.2.
- b) **Providing tailored advice and assistance** to countries/basins with gaps in monitoring and related capacities (perhaps through the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (WGMA) to be revived). This could perhaps also take a shape of **(pilot) projects**, and in this case the format of the pilot projects from 1990s and early 2000s could be revisited. Many current and on-going projects under the Convention have a monitoring and assessment component (notably pilot projects on climate change) and some “project models” could be sketched from that for review by the countries interested or the format(s) could be designed from some basic starting situations as sketched below:

Current situation	Type of assistance
No information exchange, no framework,	Initiating a dialogue, gathering basic information from the riparian countries part of the basin (e.g. Second Assessment style)
Monitoring is carried out and there is some exchange of information but the approaches are not consistent across borders	Review of scope and practices of monitoring, parameters, methodologies. Developing recommendations for adjustments.
Exchange of information is irregular and not formalized	Assistance for working out procedures and identifying options for regularizing the exchange (responsibilities etc.), or for negotiating an agreement about data and information exchange
With or without a cooperation framework, new challenges have emerged (e.g. scarcity/climate change, integrating an additional sector, specific pollution) and there are gaps in related information	Convening meetings or designing a focused process, including mobilization of specific expertise to explore how the topic could be best tackled and related information gathered and a monitoring scheme developed

Unless a process involving WGMA or a specific Expert Group is designed to accompany such a piloting to provide for an exchange of experience, the activity might only benefit a few countries. It should also be considered what kind of long-lasting product could be produced for the Convention. Some sort of *roadmaps* of ways forward to develop monitoring and assessment for a particular starting situation and/or challenge could perhaps be produced.

- c) **Explore providing a framework or a process for twinning or bringing together for peer learning/exchange of experience** between a few basins with similar challenges/management issues and possibly geographical similarity. This would involve bringing together some countries or joint bodies with well-developed monitoring set-up and information exchange and some with identified gaps to fill (in specific areas, such as groundwater monitoring, biological monitoring of surface waters). Initiation/basis for designing the format could be: a) From the reporting under the Convention, gather an overview (a spreadsheet?) showing what type of monitoring each country has, perhaps linking to some general characteristic (e.g. the institutional framework); b) a questionnaire to countries asking about their *needs* for improvement or development regarding their monitoring and assessment are and what they can *offer* in terms of experience to others; c) monitoring and assessment match-making e.g. through “speed-dating” sessions for delegates to discuss at

¹ These proposals were discussed and prioritized (narrowed down) by the Secretariat and lead Party Finland in a smaller setting in January 2018.

WGMA on the basis of their countries' interests/needs on the one hand, and capacities to share experience on the other. Possible follow up activities like working meetings or projects could either be actively coordinated by the secretariat or alternatively left up to the countries. A possible product (the minimum): *Monitoring knowledge inventory, with contacts of resource persons*. A limitation of such activity might be that the snapshot of the monitoring status it provides as value of limited duration, but the inventory could be updated upon future reporting under the Convention. A compilation of good practices is also a possible product but might end up being limited in scope.

- d) **Review the existing monitoring and assessment guidelines** to assess the value as basis in the current situation and need for updating. Gather views about what development/revision would be useful for the potential will-be Parties, either in a session at the IWRM Working Group or through a questionnaire. A challenge for the revision might be the diversity of the situations and needs in the countries (non-Parties), and a revision might have limited impact if only done as a desk exercise, expert work and then reviewed in WGMA without a practical process with application. If pilot projects are done (option 2), the beneficiary countries could be invited to review and comment on the guidelines to inform possible further work.
- e) **Data sharing** has commonly been brought up as an area in which countries would like to improve (or initiate) the cooperation. Is there need for developing more explicit guidance on data sharing aspects, from perhaps both technical and legal+institutional point of view? Could e.g. *a model data sharing protocol* (of a modular character?) be developed, possibly in cooperation with a partner, e.g. WMO?

2. **5th meeting of the Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus (18 October 2017) – proposals for future work**

Knowledge, sharing of experience and awareness raising

- Promotion of results and good practices in assessing and addressing intersectoral issues
- Facilitating exchange of experiences between basins and countries
- Disseminate the synthesis document's content (publishing), extracting and tailoring briefing material

Follow up to basin assessments:

- Support for implementation of response actions
- Specification of benefits
- Convene follow up discussions with stakeholders, identification of a follow up mechanisms

Refine the methodology and the tools available:

- Integrate better economic and energy instruments
- Elaborate the link between nexus and EIA/SEA
- Elaborate the health aspect of the nexus
- Support to national level nexus assessment (governance)
- Improve consideration of industry (mining and extractive industry), tourism
- Nexus and investments

Advisory on the application of the nexus approach:

- Develop guidance and templates on application of the nexus approach
- Advocacy, formulate messages for decision-makers, linking to the Sustainable Development Goals
- Exchange of experience about the use of nexus assessment for identification of intersectoral issues
- Develop GEF related recommendations (e.g. Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis)

Assessment projects:

- North-West Sahara Aquifer System
- Transboundary basins in Western Balkans
- Niger River Basin (sharing of experience to support integration of the nexus into operations and investment plan; in the framework of GIZ's support to the Niger Basin Authority)

3. Suggestions for possible activities on water allocation in the transboundary context made by the global workshop on water allocation in transboundary basins (Geneva, 16-17 October 2017)

The present table presents an overview with suggestions for possible future activities on water allocation under the new programme 2019-2021 of work under the Water Convention that were made at the water allocation workshop held on 16-17 October 2017. The secretariat has reviewed and structured them according to the table headings, recognizing that some suggestions may not clearly fall into one category or another. Suggestions marked in italics are those where the secretariat considers that they are either not specific to water allocation or not suited to the nature of the work under the Convention.

Advocacy		Capacity building	Demonstration projects	Tools and guidance
<i>What is water allocation about and what is the interest in agreeing? Work with press, civil society and religious leaders</i>	<i>Side events on water allocation at events with a broader thematic focus /conferences</i>	Trainings at basin or regional level with interdisciplinary participation: hydrologists, lawyers, intl. relations experts, politicians	Provide technical and legal support to countries working on water allocation agreements	Develop a guidance/cook book/checklist /toolbox on how to develop water allocation agreements Suggestions for possible contents: - Scenarios to enter discussions on water allocation -Prerequisites for water allocation agreements: strong institutional framework, IWRM, pollution prevention, CC adaptation, data sharing -Model provisions - Include water allocation aspects in guidance on joint management on transboundary groundwaters - Existing good practices of water allocation with insight on implementations
<i>Demonstrating the added value of water allocation agreements</i>	<i>Raise awareness at the political level</i>	<i>Basin-level or sub-regional level events on data sharing, joint monitoring, evaluation of water resources</i>	Expand work on adapting to climate change in transboundary basins to explicitly include water allocation questions- demonstration	
<i>Increase the visibility and promote the function of the Implementation Committee under the Convention</i>	<i>Address water allocation in the context of the human right to water and vice-versa</i>	Twinning projects between basins that have water allocation agreements and those who do not	Link water allocation to the work on benefits assessments by discussing possible water allocation when discussing benefits	Analysis of approaches to water allocation from the legal point of view, including normative considerations and analysis of the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful arrangements
<i>Reach out to those who fund the construction of hydropower facilities, encourage discussions about water allocation</i>	<i>Promote data-sharing and relevant international provisions</i>	<i>Include water allocation aspects in courses on international water law, including at university level</i>		Work with OSU to make its data base on water allocation agreements more accessible, considering multilinguism
		Organize other global workshop on water allocation to continue promoting good practices		Collection of case studies
				Collection of relevant international legal provisions

4. International Workshop on Water Scarcity: Taking action in transboundary basins and reducing health impacts (11 - 12 December 2017): suggestions for future work

What activities should the partner organizations (UNECE, WHO, FAO, INBO, EIB, WMO, GWP, IW:LEARN) and others focus on in the future in terms of water scarcity?

Overall recommendations:

- Knowledge building.
- Development of partnerships.
- Promoting a nexus approach in addressing water scarcity - connection to other sectors, for example health, energy.

Knowledge management:

- Enhance promotion of knowledge sharing platforms.
- Documenting good case studies to be shared.
- Support monitoring efforts.
- Support studies and research projects.
- Set up a mechanism to disseminate lessons learned on successful transboundary cooperation in addressing water scarcity.

Capacity building and awareness raising:

- Capacity building activities on establishment of river basin organizations.
- Workshops to connect the water, climate change and health communities and exchange experience.

Development of new tools.

Facilitate access for funding:

- Promote incubation platforms.

Support projects (including private sector engagement) for:

- Early warning systems development.
- Community adaptation projects.

**5. 9th meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (Geneva, 13 December 2017):
Suggestions for future work on water and climate**

Support for the network of pilot basins:

- Annual meetings in different countries
- Enhance existing internet platforms
- Visits, twinning and cross-basin learning
- Exchanges on methodological aspects
- Implementation of transboundary adaptation measures
- Support for ecosystem based solutions

Words into Action guide:

- Living document – needs to be updated
- Rolling out guide through, for example, through webinars
- Support in pilot countries
- Use of communications tools (not only after disasters)
- Promote the guide through existing platforms and projects
- Translate into regional guides

International processes:

- Lobbying and advocacy to keep water issues in the agenda and bridge the disconnect between water and climate issues.
- Strong representation of transboundary issues at events and conferences.
- Ensure cooperation and avoid duplication of efforts between the UN platforms

Technical support for:

- Feasibility studies
- Development of national adaptation plans
- Development of adaptation measures and indicators
- Advancement of monitoring techniques and methods

Capacity building:

- Support for smaller basins
- Trainings
- Specific capacity building activities on vulnerability assessments

Awareness raising:

- Support accession to the convention
- Strengthening awareness about climate change on local level

Monitoring:

- Analysis of Water Convention implementation level among countries

Partnerships:

- Private sector needs to be brought in
- Support for non-Parties

Knowledge management:

- Support exchange of knowledge, scientific results and good practices
- Exchange of experiences on vulnerability assessments
- Better sharing of project results
- Support for information provision and access to data

Financing climate activities:

- Help with resource mobilization and fundraising
- Support for preparatory phase of project development
- Promote and support incubators idea
- Support to development of investment plans
- Support for development of bankable projects for the Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund
- Training for Easter Europe and Caucasus (and other regions) on developing bankable projects
- Technical and expert support for drafting project proposals

Increased cooperation between the Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health on the following topics:

- Water, climate, health
- SDGs 13, 3 and 6
- Water quality
- Water-related disasters
- Better link to health issues and WASH

Specific topics to advance thinking and share experience:

- Focus on delta areas (combined efforts on climate change in rivers and at sea)
- Links and joint work under NDCs, support for implementation of NDCs
- Support for development of basin-wide adaptation strategies
- Water quality
- Water and ecosystems
- Water-sharing and allocation under changing climate
- Dam safety
- More focus on agricultural discharge of water
- Introduction of early warning systems on the basin-wide level

Specific projects to support:

- Lake Chad
- Congo basin
- Joint pilot projects in assessing the readiness of healthcare services for extreme weather events
- Qualitative and quantitative assessments of climate change implications
- Restoration of hydrological stations

6. Proposed workplan of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents for 2019–2020 discussed at its sixteenth meeting (Dnipro, Ukraine, 18 May 2017) and when meeting in the framework of the small group of experts on fire-water retention (Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 19 January 2018)

Since its establishment in 1998, the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) has effectively supported countries in preventing accidental water pollution. This was mainly achieved by the development of safety guidelines and good practices on different topics (for instance, on tailings management facilities and pipelines), and it had been complimented with the facilitation of workshops, transboundary exercises and other related activities. In recent years, the Joint Expert Group had focussed its efforts on supporting operators and competent authorities, particularly from countries with economies in transition, in the practical application of the afore-mentioned safety guidelines and good practices, among others, by developing related checklists to facilitate the implementation of the guidelines at the national, regional and local levels.

With regard to the above, the following activities are envisaged by the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) in the biennium 2019–2020, with the understanding that Parties would provide expertise and lead country support, including financial support, to support their implementation:

1. Disseminate, test and facilitate the application of the UNECE Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Fire-water Management and Retention

In the biennium 2017–2018, safety guidelines and good practices for fire-water management and retention were developed by the Joint Expert Group. Different UNECE guidance documents developed previously under the framework of the Joint Expert Group had been used as a basis to set up practical checklists and measure catalogues for competent authorities and operators to facilitate their application and implementation, such as the safety guidelines and good practices for tailings managements facilities which were used to develop a related methodology – comprised of a tailings hazard index, a checklist and a measure catalogue. In the biennium 2019–2020, the Joint Expert Group would support competent authorities and operators from interested countries in testing the application of the safety guidelines and good practices for fire-water management and retention.

[Lead countries: Finland, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (tbc)]

2. Support the implementation of UNECE safety guidelines and checklists in countries with economies in transition and interested United Nations Member States beyond the UNECE region

Countries with economies in transition often face challenges in implementing the provisions of the Conventions. The Joint Expert Group will continue to provide assistance to such countries with regard to preventing accidental water pollution, mainly by supporting them in the implementation of the principles and recommendations in guidance materials produced within the framework of the Conventions, including the checklist for contingency planning for accidents affecting transboundary waters (2015) and the safety guidelines and good practices for fire-water management and retention (2018), oil terminals (2014), tailings management facilities (2008) and pipelines (2006). These guidance materials will be promoted at workshops and training events organized by the Joint Expert Group, in cooperation with international river commissions and other organizations, as appropriate and feasible. In the period 2019–2020, this could be achieved by, among others, providing support to the implementation of ongoing and possible future projects on improving the safety of tailings management facilities in the Caucasus and on strengthening the safety of mining operations, in particular tailings management facilities in Central Asia.

[Lead countries: Germany and Switzerland (tbc)]

3. Promote transboundary response exercises

The promotion of response exercises, in particular in the transboundary context, is of utmost importance to be able to effectively prepare for and respond to industrial accidents, especially those that might cause transboundary water pollution. To this end, the Joint Expert Group could further promote the organization of transboundary response exercises, for example, by participating in and facilitating workshops, seminars or webinars on lessons learned from such exercises, relevant international forums and conferences.

7. Global workshop on the benefits of transboundary water cooperation (6-7 February 2018)

During the workshop, the secretariat asked the participants to share through group discussions their needs, proposals and possible contributions for future work on benefits of transboundary water cooperation under the Water Convention.

Challenges faced :

- Politics: political will , political instability, upstream-downstream, no data sharing
- Perspectives: identifying common benefits and priorities; balancing national benefits vs shared benefits; mindsets
- Differences: in technological and socioeconomic development levels
- Decision-making process
- Convening countries: lack of a convenor or champion, getting countries to work together at political level
- Capacities: lack of resources and technical capacities
- Methodology (and data) for assessment
- Solutions: how to share benefits
- Need to «refresh memories» if benefits work done in the past

Future work on benefits under the Water Convention:

- Build on current work programme
- Awareness raising (e.g. health and livelihoods)
- Develop guiding principles, updating and disseminating policy guidance note
- Workshops (River Basin Organizations to share experiences, hydrodiplomacy)
- Training (benefit assessment, benefit sharing, twinning)
- Capacity development of stakeholders
- All types of basins (established, not yet solidified, conflict regions,...)
- More involvement of other sectors
- Regional Economic Centers, River Basin Organizations, International Union for Conservation of Nature, International Water Management Institute, international research organisations, local NGOs, donors, academics, local communities...

Potential contributions to benefits work :

- Political support
- Technical support (e.g. updating guidance, security perspective)
- Manpower and local knowledge
- Participate in workshops to share experiences
- Organisation of workshops and trainings
- Financial and technical support in pilot projects
- Dissemination of results, awareness raising