



Ministry of Infrastructure
and Water Management

Global workshop on exchange of data and information in transboundary basins

To be held in Geneva, 4-5 December 2019

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland,
starting at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 4 December 2019

Room XVI

PROGRAMME

The main objectives of the workshop are to discuss practical experiences, on the basis of a range of initiatives and transboundary basin or aquifer cases, related to different key issues in information and data exchange, considering different solutions. The workshop also aims to draw some recommendations for efficient and sustainable data and information exchange in a transboundary context which can be taken on in future work supported by the bodies under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and the workshop's organizing partners – the European Union Water Initiative Plus EUWI+, International Network of Basin Organizations, World Bank, World Meteorological Organization, UN Environment and the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC). The conclusions from the workshop will be used to foster transboundary cooperation and to provide support to countries and joint bodies, such as transboundary basin organizations. In particular, the conclusions will guide the discussions in the meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment which will convene in Geneva on 6 December 2019.

Day 1 Wednesday, 4 December 2019

10.00 – 10.45 Opening session

Moderator: *Mr. Niokhor Ndour, Director of management and Planning of Water Resources, Senegal.*

- Opening speech, *Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).*
- Opening remarks about the linkages between joining the Water Convention and improving exchange of data and information in a transboundary setting, *Mr. Niokhor Ndour, Director of management and Planning of Water Resources, Senegal.*
- Presentation about the work on monitoring and assessment under the Water Convention and Introduction to the programme of the event, *Mr. Seppo Rekolainen, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland.*

10.45 – 12.20 **Session 1: Identifying the relevant types of data and information for exchange according to the context and the thematic (i.e. assess the baseline situation and the status of water bodies, flood risk, availability of data and information)**

Moderator: *Mr. Jos Timmerman, Senior Expert at WaterFrames, The Netherlands.*

The presentations in this session provide some examples about systematic approaches to data and information relevant to water resources, applicable in a transboundary context, to support of informed management action. Among the aspects to be highlighted are the importance of establishing a baseline for assessing the status of water bodies, characterizing river basins and aquifers as well as linking information about the status of water bodies and pressures on them and the drivers for management action.

- How to achieve good environmental status of water bodies- Selecting the most indicative quality elements for chemical and hydro morphological pressures on water bodies: Experience in implementing EU Water Framework Directive principles in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus under the European Union Water Initiative plus programme — *Mr. Andreas Scheidleder, Environment Agency Austria, EUWI+.*
- Driving force-Pressure-Status-Impact-Response framework: Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme — global application, *Centre on Water and Environment at United Nations Environmental Programme- (UNEP-DHI Partnership) (TBC).*
- Source to Sea: Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management experience — *Ms. Stensdotter Blomberg, Senior Scientific Officer, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management.*

Discussion about political, technical, financial and administrative obstacles to why data and information exchange is not happening or not effective (These issues will be followed up on during Session 6.)

12.20 – 13.00 Session 2: “Infrastructure” for collection and management of data and information

This involves looking at infrastructure for collecting and managing data, including monitoring networks and equipment for measuring campaigns but also data management and information systems. Examples will demonstrate different degrees of harmonizing approaches and sharing data and information, possibilities of optimizing at the transboundary level as well as lighter and more advanced or comprehensive options.

Moderator: TBC

- Network optimization across borders and the challenge of integrating project-based extensions: Senegal River basin — *Mr. Ibrahim Samba Ba, Expert manager at the Senegal River Basin Development Authority (OMVS).*
- Some procedures and tools for an integrated and shared water data management at national and transboundary level— *by Mr. Paul Haener, International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO).*

13.00 – 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 to 16.00 Session 2: “Infrastructure” for collection and management of data and information (continued)

- International monitoring network, and the transboundary data exchange in the Rhine river basin – merely technological progress?— *Mr. Peter Diehl, executive secretary of the national committee for the Rhine (German part of the Rhine river basing data of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR).*
- Current Legal Frameworks and Future Prospects of Data and Information Exchange in Afghanistan Transboundary River Basins— *Mr. Ghulam Mujtaba Zaka, Desk Member of Trans-boundary waters Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.*
- Data, modeling and decision support tools for transboundary water resource management in LAC —*Mr. Raul Munoz Castillo, Senior Water Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank (remote intervention).*
- Discussion *facilitated by the moderator*

16.00-18.00 Session 3: Achieving comparability of data and information in a transboundary context

In the first part of the session, participants will gain insights on how to achieve or improve comparability of data and information and in the second part, there will be a group discussion.

Moderator: TBD

- Addressing water policy information needs with official statistics: International statistical frameworks, guidelines and classifications — *Mr. Michael Nagy, Statistics Division, UNECE.*
- From physical-chemical to hydrobiological monitoring and data exchange and assessment of water body status: challenges of comparability of monitoring data and information with different and changing approaches of riparian countries- Case study from the Belarus-Lithuanian cooperation on the Neman River Basin — *Mr. Vladimir Korneev, Head of Monitoring and State Water Cadastre Department, Central Research Institute for Complex Use of Water Belarus.*

- Importance of data exchange and Information in cross-border basins shared by Tunisia— *Mr. Hassen Lofti Frigui, Water Director, Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries, Tunisia.*
- Discussion *facilitated by the moderator*
- WMO Hydrological Observing System (WHOS) — *Mr. Igor Chernov, Associate Project Support Officer at World Meteorological Organization, WMO.*
- Use of remote sensing as a source of data across transboundary basins: World Bank to identify an example TBD.
- Discussion *facilitated by the moderator*

Day 2 Thursday, 5 December 2019

10.00 – 11.30 **Session 4: Legal Basis and Institutional Framework for transboundary data and information exchange**

Legal and institutional framework for exchange of data and information in a transboundary context (and other governance aspects).

Moderator: *Ms. Christina Leb, Senior Counsel at the World Bank*

- Introductory Presentation: Obligations under international water law for transboundary exchange of data and information — *Mr. Steve McCaffrey, Distinguished Professor of Law at the University at the Pacific, United States.*
- Data exchange in transboundary waters: Assessing on-the-ground practice— *Ms. Mukuyu Patience, Researcher at the International Water Management Institute-Southern Africa office in Pretoria (IWMI).*
- Development of a Multilingual Geo spatial database of Water Pollution in the Amazon Basin ACTO- GEF- UNEP — *Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) – (TBC).*
- Progressive evolution of the legal basis for data and information exchange in the Sava River Basin: protocols, data policy, GIS and information systems, *Presentation by Mr. Mirza Sarač, Senior Specialist in Water Management, International Sava River Basin Commission.*
- Water quality cooperation on the basis of a bilateral agreement: Kazakhstan-China— *Representative of the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan in Geneva.*
- Discussion *facilitated by the moderator*

11.30-13.00 **Session 5: The architecture of effective data and information exchange in transboundary settings**

Group work session devoted to discuss specific types or uses of data and information for integrated water resources management in transboundary settings for specific purposes, e.g. for flood risk reduction and for fulfilling international obligations (e.g. due to organizations holding relevant data, time frames or other user requirements). The group discussion involves reflecting on the availability and adequacy of international guidance, and possible gaps, as well as identifying good practice in integrating such information into basin planning and ensuring comparability across borders.¹

¹ The outcomes of this discussion will contribute to the discussion at the 15th meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment about the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters and their possible updating or complementing.

- Moderation and Introduction to the group work: *Ms. Annukka Lipponen, Water Convention Secretariat, UNECE.*
- Group discussion in the following thematic groups according to an instruction to be provided (facilitators TBC):
 - Early warning systems for flood and drought period management (Michael Schwab, WMO)
 - Future Outlook: climate change and socio-economic demands (population growth, sectoral uses etc.) (*Ms. Hanna Plotnykova, Water Convention Secretariat*)
 - Ecosystems and environmental information (TBC)
 - Managing and harmonizing information for reporting (SDGs, regional organizations' reporting, WFD, flood directive, etc.) (INBO/International Office for Water)
 - Groundwater (*Mr. Neno Kukurić, Director, International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre and Mr. Jose Luis Martin, Expert in groundwater management*)
- Reporting back in plenary
- Recap by moderator

13.00 -15.00 **Lunch break**

15.00 -16.30 **Session 6: How to get data and information exchange started, progressively improved or participation broadened**

This session focuses on discussing different challenges and obstacles that complicate initiating exchange of information and data, informed by some examples where first steps have been taken. Progressively enhanced the scope or broadening involvement –perhaps with different degrees of participation – will also be discussed.

Moderator: Ms. Tracy Molefi, Programme Coordinator, International Waters, The Permanent Okavango River Water Commission (OKACOM).

- Turning an incident into an opportunity for initiating data and information exchange: Moving on from a dam failure between Nigeria and Cameroon — *Mr. Daniel Claude Wang Sonne, Sub Director of Energy Management, Ministry of Water Resources and Energy, Cameroon.*
- Modalities of work when exchanging data among Parties and with observers: Mekong River Basin— *Mr. Soukaseum Phichit, Information systems and Database Specialist, Mekong River Commission Secretariat.*
- Robustness in the face of challenges/Planned developments and coordination needs: Data Exchange in Nile River Basin— *Mr. Seifeldin Hamad Abdalla, executive Secretary of Nile River Basin Initiative.*
- How to overcome obstacles in data exchange and information: - La Plata River Basin - Data bank and use of diverse sources — *by Mr. Daniel Greif Carambula, National Director of Water, Ministry of Environment, Uruguay.*
- Getting started with information exchange: Case study from the Khrami/Debed River basin between Georgia and Armenia — *Ms. Eliso Barnovi, EUWI+ national representative in Georgia.*
- Plenary discussion facilitated by the moderator.

16.30-18.00 **Session 7: Sustainability of monitoring and data and information exchange**

The session will address sustainability of collecting and exchanging data and information in transboundary settings, including financing. The session will take place as an interactive panel discussion. On the financing, among the issues considered are, for example, how technology can improve cost-effectiveness of data exchange, and how international data sources/initiatives can support countries in strengthening their exchange. Moreover, aspects of sustainability that strengthen effective data and information exchange will also be covered, for instance, institutional questions and quality of data and information. Climate change and other issues of anthropogenic nature, such as industrial accidents, pollution and political instability may pose challenges to continuity in monitoring cooperation. Finally, panelists are also invited to discuss the role of basin organizations, States and civil society organizations (e.g. NGOs and research institutes).

Moderator: Mr. Peter Kovacs, Head of Department, Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the UNECE Water Convention, Department of River Basin Management and Water Protection, Ministry of Interior.

Panelists and topics that will be discussed (short ppts or interventions without slides):

- Finance: Ms. Christina Leb, Senior Counsel at the World Bank.
- Technology: World Water Quality Alliance [the speaker to be identified by the UN Environment] TBC
- Country perspective from Honduras: Challenges in keeping monitoring and exchange ongoing— Ms. Sonia E. Carpio Mendoza, Ambassador-Advisor, Sovereignty and Borders Commission, Secretariat of Foreign Relations (TBC)
- Institutional responsibilities and good practice for sustainability in data exchange-CEEAC Case Study: Mr. Narcisse Odoua, Senior Water Manager expert, CEEAC
- Central Asian Water Information System: the role of joint bodies in ensuring continuity in gathering hydrological data: Ms. Dinara Ziganshina, Deputy Director of Scientific Information Centre of ICWC in Central Asia
- The role of utilities, private sector, scientific institutions, civil society organizations and NGOs. Data Exchange to promote peace cooperation in Jordan Valley. Mr. Navad Tal, manager of EcoPeaceMiddleEast (NGO).
- Discussion facilitated by the moderator

17.50-18.00 Closure of the workshop

Friday, 6 December 2019

9.30 – 17.30 **15th meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment**

Among the topics to be discussed: possible updating needs of existing guidelines monitoring and assessment under the Water Convention and strategic directions for future work in this area, including exchange of data and information.