



Webinar on transboundary water cooperation and coordination between agencies and RCs to support transboundary cooperation (based on examples from Drin and Drina river basins)

7 July 2020 10.00- 11.30 (Geneva time)

Provisional agenda

Background/rationale:

The United Nations Inter-Agency Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on Environment and Climate Change for Europe and Central Asia was launched in March 2020 and has attracted 18 members from the UN family: FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UN Habitat, UN Women, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNICEF, UNOPS, WFP, WHO and WMO.

Since its launch the IBC has organized three meetings with Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to discuss and identify concrete ways in which the IBC and RCs/UNCTs can collaborate, at both national and sub-regional levels.

In the sub-regional meeting with RCs in South East Europe, RCs highlighted environment and climate change as key areas of intervention, and welcomed assistance from the IBC in convening subregional actions and projects and promoting collaboration between countries of the region. Furthermore, RCs mentioned that it was important to build on existing projects and tools on the ground at the national level to promote subregional activities and how best to coordinate on regional projects, with specific focus on transboundary cooperation and climate action.

An on-going Global Environmental Facility (GEF) /UNDP project on the Drin Basin,¹ implemented by a partnership extending beyond the UN,² provides a good example for transboundary cooperation in the Balkans relevant to showcase because of the UN system cooperation and potential for even broader cooperation. Several UN organizations contribute their experience in transboundary cooperation, UNECE as the secretariat for the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes providing tools and assistance, and UNDP as the implementing agency for the project. UNESCO provides specific expertise on groundwater, notably transboundary groundwater management.

The Drin GEF project is complemented by analytical work and inter-sectoral dialogue to broaden the cooperation at transboundary level.³ The transboundary work on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus is relevant for climate action (mitigation and adaptation), sustainable development, post-COVID-19 recovery plans, etc. approaches that require deep inter-sectoral coordination.

¹ A Strategic Action Programme for the Drin project was recently endorsed by the riparians:

<https://www.thegef.org/news/political-cooperation-across-borders-protects-water-resources-drin-basin>

² The Global Water Partnership Mediterranean executes the project in cooperation with UNECE.

³ The nexus work related to the Drin and another basin in the Balkans, the Drina, in support of transboundary cooperation, highlights trade-offs and opportunities across sectors. The reports can be referred to for details:

<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47750>,

https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/nexus/Drin_TDA_-_Nexus_Thematic_Report_Final.pdf



Questions for the discussion:

1. How do UN agencies come together to support transboundary cooperation?
2. What role do/could the RC play in coordinating the UN's activities at the national level in support of regional intergovernmental plans and strategies?
3. What are the obstacles to inter-sectoral coordination (important e.g. for climate projects, sustainable development, post-COVID-19 recovery)?

Provisional agenda:

Time: 1.5 hours (7 July, 10.00-11.30 Geneva time) Via: Microsoft Teams

10.00-10.05 Welcoming word from IBC chairs (one IBC co-chair)

Part 1: Experience in transboundary cooperation and inter-sectoral cooperation at transboundary level (moderation by Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa, Regional Advisor on Environment, UNECE)

10.05-10.10 Introduction, Brian Williams, UN Resident Coordinator in Albania

10.10-10.20 The Drin River Basin project and the Strategic Action Programme, UNDP Albania

10.20-10.35 Formalizing transboundary cooperation and mobilizing support across sectors with a nexus approach in the Balkans (the Drin and Drina Basins), Annukka Lipponen & Lucia de Strasser, UNECE Water Convention

10.35-10.40 Strengthening capacity for groundwater management in the Drin, Alexandros Makarigakis, UNESCO

10.40-10.45 Possibilities to support implementation of activities related to monitoring in Strategic Action Programme, Tommaso Abrate, WMO

Part 2: Discussion and sharing of experiences (moderation by Brian Williams, UN Resident Coordinator in Albania)

10.45-10.50 Introduction, Françoise Jacob, UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia

10.50-11.20 Discussion/experience sharing

11.20-11.30 Conclusion and main take-away messages