

“ Beyond Water”  
Workshop on Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation  
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# Summary of messages relevant for the Policy Guidance Note

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# Regional economic integration benefits

- **Context/approach:**
  - Trend towards sub-basin agreements
  - Opportunity to assess benefits as part of “nexus assessments”
  - Move focus away from water allocation (a zero-sum game) to reduce tensions, opportunities to focus on development based on equitable use of WR
  - Distinction “vision” (enabling environment) and “action” (investments)
- **Benefits:**
  - TWC can lead to regional water resources policy and regional water investment plan, facilitating mobilisation of funds
  - Development of regional infrastructure, e.g. electricity networks

# Communicating benefits

- **Approach:** Comms as dialogue, not (just) unidirectional message delivery. Communication between countries and within countries. Leading to/building on cooperation efforts depending on stage of TWC.
- **Roles:** RBOs to take lead in communicating to/with direct and indirect beneficiaries (stakeholder mapping, PE analysis). Address fora where policy is made. Build constituencies -- mandate (and resources) for local communities. Third parties to be available (specific role case-by-case)
- **Tactics:** focus on moving from perceptions to facts, understand those that you want to communicate with, relate benefits to national priorities & programmes, packaging benefits, consider timing (e.g. elections)
- **Messages:** simple, fact-based, tangible topics that stakeholders can relate to, positive language (but trade-offs?), framing as risks and cost of inaction, align to political context, develop success stories
- **Mechanisms:** joint bodies' platforms, process of preparation of basin plans, trusted persons, think tanks, independent panel of experts, study tours and workshops (tailored to stakeholders, themes), policy briefs, training of journalists/teachers, websites less focused on technical issues, "basin day"
- **Ministry of Finance:** 3Ss: substantive (% GDP of water-dependence sectors), sound (methodology), succinct (ExecSum); joint reports MoF/MoW; looking to avoid liabilities and rule out expensive options

# Geopolitical benefits

- **Context/approach:**

- Increasing awareness, interest and mainstreaming into foreign policy, but don't overestimate geopolitical motivations in particular basins, be aware of limits of water diplomacy.
- “Sovereignty” is a key obstacle leading to a non-linear relationship between political effort and benefits

- **Benefits:**

- Contribution to peace, security and political stability through confidence-building and conflict prevention (managing risks) – (keeping dialogue avenues open; interventions in small conflicting basins; building basin citizenship)
- Those benefits accrue to international community at large and can have spill over effects in other basins (through example/precedent)
- Closer regional political cooperation (e.g. Lake Chad Basin Organisation leading a regional approach to addressing security challenges ), achieving other foreign policy objectives (e.g. HRWS), help to manage other risks through interlinkages (e.g. climate change, nexus)

# Assessing regional economic integration benefits

- Assessment not equally important in all basins
- Look at interdependencies, particularly in connection with energy
- Monetary valuation possible for: hydropower, fisheries, flood protection (Finland-Russia: compensation)

# Assessing geopolitical benefits

- Don't over-emphasise geopolitical benefits and costs of inaction
- Difficult to qualify, much more to quantify or monetise
- But possible to identify cross-links with other benefits
- Consider short and long term timescales, beneficiaries
- “Traffic-light” indicators to identify basin “stability”, which suggests potential for geopolitical benefits
- Gather factual base (physical variables, effects on economic sectors and other policy objectives) and organise “expert group assessment” (closed doors or open forum) involving think tanks