

Monitoring progress of transboundary water cooperation

How to become a Party to the Helsinki Water Convention

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1. Monitoring transboundary water cooperation under the 2030 agenda for sustainable development

SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

➤ **Target 6.5:** By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, **including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.**

- **Indicator 6.5.2:** percentage of transboundary basin area with an **operational arrangement for water cooperation.**

Complements indicator 6.5.1 which measures the advancement of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

Custodian agencies: UNECE and UNESCO

Rationale: Specific agreements or other arrangements concluded between co-riparian countries are a key precondition to ensure long-term, sustainable cooperation.



Template for reporting

I. Calculation of SDG indicator 6.5.2

II. Transboundary water management at the national level

Legislation, measures taken to reduce pollution, measures to enhance water efficiency, ecosystem approach, groundwater, EIA,

III. Questions for each transboundary basin, river, lake or aquifer

Agreements and their scope (geographic, uses, topics of cooperation)

Joint bodies, their tasks and activities

Cooperation with non-Parties, action plan & strategies, data exchange, joint monitoring and assessment, reduction of transboundary impacts, mutual assistance, stakeholder involvements

Difficulties and achievements

IV. Final questions

Main challenges and achievements

→ Crucial that all countries report by the deadline (15 June) in order to establish the baseline



Methodology for 6.5.2: Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation

Main steps for calculation

- 1- calculate the surface area of each **transboundary basin** and the **total sum** within a country
- 2- verify which transboundary basins are covered by a **cooperation arrangement**
- 3- check which of the existing arrangements are **operational**
- 4- calculate the **share** of transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements of the total sum of transboundary basin area.



Criteria for operationality of cooperation arrangements

1. Existence of a joint body, joint mechanism, commission (e.g. a river basin organization) for transboundary cooperation
2. Regular formal communications between riparian countries (e.g. regular meetings)
3. Existence of joint or coordinated water management plan(s), or of joint objectives
4. Regular exchange of data and information between riparians.

Basis: the main principles of customary international law (reflected in global freshwater conventions, UN ILC Draft Articles on The Law of Transboundary Aquifers)

2. Reporting under the Helsinki Water Convention

- Adopted by the Parties in November 2015
- Every 3 years as of 2017
- Information to be gathered through a questionnaire covers transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters sent to national authorities responsible for transboundary water cooperation
- Involves both Parties and non-Parties
- Monitoring of indicator 6.5.2 and gathering of additional information enriching the analysis



How to become a Party to the Helsinki Water Convention

National process and possible support by UNECE

Process in countries considering accession

Initiate national consultation process

Introduce the Helsinki Water Convention, discuss possible benefits / challenges. Importance of having a “focal point”

Organize national workshop on the Helsinki Water Convention:

Based on questions raised by country authorities, secretariat facilitates workshop to help clarify rights / obligations and present examples of implementation of the Convention

National process (depending on domestic legislation for conclusion of treaties): inter-ministerial consultation (WG) to assess impact of Convention on domestic law, policies and on TC, lead ministry submitting assessment to MFA, approval by parliament/government level, deposition of instrument of accession to UN SG

Thank you for your attention!

**More information on the
monitoring of SDG target 6.5.2**

[http://www.unwater.org/publications-publications-detail/en/c/428764/](http://www.unwater.org/publications/publications-detail/en/c/428764/)

**More information on the Helsinki
Water Convention**

<http://unece.org/env/water>

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