

**PAN-EUROPEAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP IN SUPPORT OF THE
MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION
SDG 6 Indicator 6.5.2 and Water Convention
Preparation for the second cycle of reporting**
Geneva, Switzerland, 21 October 2019
To be held at the Palais des Nations, room XI, starting at 10 a.m.

Concept note

Background and context

In 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The indicator framework for the SDGs was subsequently adopted by the UNGA (A/RES/71/313). Central to the achievement of the whole 2030 Agenda is SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, with its 8 targets and 11 indicators addressing the whole complexity of water management.

SDG Target 6.5 seeks the implementation, by countries, of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) at all levels, including through transboundary water cooperation as appropriate. To measure the progress of transboundary cooperation, indicator 6.5.2 was adopted. It is defined as the “percentage of transboundary basin area within a country that has an operational arrangement for water cooperation” (see box below). UNECE and UNESCO were designated as custodian agencies (responsible agencies) for this indicator, given their experience and mandate on the topic.

In the course of 2017, the first reporting exercise on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) took place. A similar reporting template was sent to all countries, both Parties and non-Parties to the Water Convention. The template for reporting under the Convention was included as part of this template. For Parties to the Water Convention, this allowed maximizing synergies and efficiencies, by carrying out the two reporting processes together. For non-Parties, this allowed complementing and substantiating the calculation of the SDG indicator 6.5.2 in Section I and providing a more detailed picture of the advancement of cooperation.

In the first reporting exercise, a total of 107 out of 153 countries sharing transboundary waters reported on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and 38 out of 40 Parties reported under the Water Convention. The national reports received during the first cycle were analysed by UNECE, in cooperation with UNESCO, which allowed to establish a baseline on transboundary water cooperation. On SDG 6.5.2, the co-custodian agencies produced the joint publication *Progress on transboundary water cooperation: Global baseline for SDG indicator 6.5.2*¹ and contributed to the joint publication on the global status on SDG 6 and other water-related targets *SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation*². UNECE also analysed reports received from Parties on the implementation of the Water Convention,

¹ available at <http://www.unwater.org/publications/progress-on-transboundary-water-cooperation-652/>

² available at http://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/sdg-6-synthesis-report-2018-on-water-and-sanitation/

on which the report *Progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation under the Water Convention*³ was produced.

The analysis of the reports show that the pan-European region was the region with the highest rate of responses. Of the 50 countries in the region that share transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers, responses were received from 44 of these countries, and an overall indicator 6.5.2 value average of 79.6 % is available for 29 countries. High levels of operational arrangements throughout Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia reflect a long tradition of cooperation across the region, however only 14 countries in the region have all their transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements, and transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers remain not covered by an agreement or a basin-wide agreement.

Where arrangements are in place, the main objective of the second reporting cycle is to increase the quality of national data reporting on their implementation, with a view to increasing their usefulness in informing decision/policy making processes related to transboundary water cooperation at national, basin or aquifer, regional and global levels. As for countries sharing waters still not covered by

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

SDG Target 6.5 “By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate” emphasizes the importance of transboundary cooperation.

Indicator 6.5.2 tracks the percentage of transboundary basin area within a country that has an operational arrangement for water cooperation.

An arrangement for water cooperation is a bilateral or multilateral treaty, convention, agreement or other formal arrangement between riparian countries that provides a framework for cooperation.

For the arrangement to be considered operational, the following criteria need to be fulfilled:

- Existence of a joint body or mechanism
- Regular, formal communication between riparian countries in form of meetings (at least once a year)
- Joint or coordinated management plans or objectives
- Regular exchange of data and information (at least once a year)

In 2015, the United Nations Statistical Commission created the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), composed of Member States and including regional and international agencies as observers. The IAEG-SDGs was tasked with developing and implementing a global indicator framework for SDGs and their targets.

The Methodology for the measuring indicator 6.5.2 has been approved by the IAEG-SDGs. The indicator was subsequently upgraded to Tier 1, in November 2018, recognizing that the “indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant”.

³ available at <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=49805&L=0>

operational arrangements, the first reporting exercise showed that data gaps remain a fundamental setback. Good practices arising from the first reporting process show how coordination in reporting between riparian countries may improve a shared understanding and ultimately also transboundary cooperation.

In view of next the reporting cycle, which will take place in 2020, this workshop is organized as part of a series of thematic consultations and sub-regional workshops, in view of building capacity in monitoring progress and reporting on SDG 6.5.2, within the framework of the UN-Water Integrated monitoring initiative for SDG 6. While its first phase (2015-2018) focused on establishing the global baseline for SDG indicators, the focus in the second phase (2019-2022) is shifting towards building national ownership on the use of national data. These meetings are also endorsed in the recommendation of UNESCO 23rd Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme (Paris, 11-15 June 2018) and in Decision VIII/1 of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (Nur-Sultan, 10-12 October 2018).

Objectives of the workshop

The focus of this workshop is on improving capacities from countries in the European, Caucasus and Central Asian regions to collect, report and make use of data on SDG indicator 6.5.2 measuring transboundary cooperation and under the Water Convention. In this effort, a strong focus is to improve coordination and harmonization in reporting among countries sharing the same transboundary aquifers, rivers and lakes.

Taking into account the results of the first reporting exercise in the pan-European region and in view of preparing the second reporting exercise, the main objectives of the workshop are to:

- Introduce the revised and recently developed guidance materials, including the revised reporting template for the second cycle on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and under the Water Convention, the revised step-by-step methodology for calculation of indicator 6.5.2 and the draft Guide to reporting under the Convention and as a contribution to SDG Indicator 6.5.2;
- Discuss the types of gaps and discrepancies in the data provided in the national reports that may arise when the information is analysed at agreement, river or lake basin and aquifer levels and what this means for the use of reports and country data on SDG 6.5.2 and under the Water Convention;
- Exchange good practices and lessons learned from riparian countries which coordinated their answers concerning their shared waters and the implementation of their agreements in view of harmonizing their reports in the first reporting cycle;
- Identify synergies between reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2, the Water Convention and SDG indicator 6.5.1, which measures the degree of integrated water resources management implementation (IWRM) at all levels, including at a transboundary level;
- Reflect and discuss on how the first exercise can serve as a basis for reporting in the next cycle, including its usefulness in informing decision/policy-making processes related to transboundary water cooperation at all levels;
- Increase the rate of responses and the quality of reports in the second reporting cycle.

Participants

The workshop is targeted to experts responsible for completing the reporting template or coordinating the reporting process on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and under the Water Convention. All countries sharing transboundary waters in the pan-European region are invited. The following countries are being invited:

Albania	Czechia	Italy	North Macedonia	Slovenia
Andorra	Denmark	Kazakhstan	Norway	Spain
Armenia, Republic of	Estonia	Kyrgyzstan	Poland	Sweden
Austria	Finland	Latvia	Portugal	Switzerland
Azerbaijan	France	Liechtenstein	Republic of Moldova	Tajikistan
Belarus	Georgia	Lithuania	Romania	Turkey
Belgium	Germany	Luxembourg	Russian Federation	Turkmenistan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Greece	Monaco	San Marino	Ukraine
Bulgaria	Hungary	Montenegro	Serbia	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Croatia	Ireland	Netherlands	Slovakia	Uzbekistan

Practical information

The workshop will be held on Monday 21 October 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, back to back with the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, which takes place on 22–24 October 2019. It will start at 10 a.m. and end at 6 p.m. It will be held at the Palais des Nations in Room XI.

The working languages will be English and Russian.

All participants are requested to register online by 7 October 2019 using the following link: <https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=oHKlm6>. In case of difficulties please contact the secretariat by e-mail (mayola.lidome@un.org).

Participants requiring entry visas to Switzerland should inform the UNECE secretariat (mayola.lidome@un.org) as soon as possible. Since Switzerland is part of the Schengen Zone, obtaining a visa might take up to 5 weeks. Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and initiate visa procedures at least five weeks before the meeting.

Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition and developing countries may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the meeting. Applications for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat (mayola.lidome@un.org) as soon as possible, but **no later than 12 September 2019** using the attached financial support request form which needs to be duly signed.

Further information and relevant material on the meeting will be made available on the following website in due course: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52197>

Additional materials related to SDG indicator 6.5.2 are available at the following webpages:

- www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicators/target-65/indicators652
- www.unece.org/water/transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting.html
- <http://ihp-wins.unesco.org/documents/332>

For any substantial question on the workshop, please do not hesitate to contact UNECE, at transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting@un.org and transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting@unesco.org.