

## ASIA ONLINE REGIONAL WORKSHOP SUPPORTING THE MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGs

# TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION

## SDG 6 Indicator 6.5.2

17 September 2020

### CONCEPT NOTE

#### 1. Background and context

In 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) adopted the 2030, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The indicator framework for the SDGs was subsequently adopted by the UNGA<sup>1</sup>. Central to the achievement of the entire 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 calls on countries by 2030 to *implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate*. To measure the progress of transboundary, SDG indicator 6.5.2 was adopted. It is defined as the *percentage of transboundary basin area within a country with an operational arrangement for water cooperation* (see box below). The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are custodian agencies (responsible agencies) for this indicator, given their experience and mandate on the topic. The national reports received during the first exercise, in 2017-18, were analysed by UNECE and UNESCO, which allowed to establish a baseline on transboundary water cooperation. National reports of the first reporting exercise are available online<sup>2</sup>. On the basis of the information contained in the national reports, the co-custodian agencies produced the joint publication *Progress on transboundary water cooperation: Global baseline for SDG indicator 6.5.2*<sup>3</sup> 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*<sup>4</sup>, as well as to the SDG 6 Data Portal<sup>5</sup>.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) supports follow-up and review of the SDGs at the regional level, especially in the context of the Asia Pacific Forum on

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, 2017, A/RES/71/313

<sup>2</sup> available at [www.unece.org/water/transboundary\\_water\\_cooperation\\_reporting.html](http://www.unece.org/water/transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting.html)

<sup>3</sup> available at [www.unwater.org/publications/progress-on-transboundary-water-cooperation-652/](http://www.unwater.org/publications/progress-on-transboundary-water-cooperation-652/)

<sup>4</sup> available at [www.unwater.org/publication\\_categories/sdg-6-synthesis-report-2018-on-water-and-sanitation/](http://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/sdg-6-synthesis-report-2018-on-water-and-sanitation/)

<sup>5</sup> available at: [www.sdg6data.org](http://www.sdg6data.org)

Sustainable Development (APFSD) and coordinates the regional activities of UN-Water. As such, ESCAP is involved in monitoring progress on SDG 6 and its targets in Asia and the Pacific, in particular through developing an SDG 6 Goal Profile and by reviewing reporting mechanisms from Asia-Pacific countries on SDG 6 through different processes

The second reporting phase of SDG indicator 6.5.2 started at the beginning of 2020 with a reporting deadline on 30 June 2020. While the response rate has been high, not all 153 countries sharing water resources have submitted their national report. This online workshop is organized as part of a series of **thematic consultation** and sub-regional workshops to **build capacity in monitoring progress and reporting on SDG 6.5.2**. This online workshop is the first one to focus on the Asia region. It is organized in the framework of the second phase of the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6<sup>6</sup>.

### **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 cooperation over shared resources.

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. Based on the results of the first reporting exercise, indicator 6.5.2 was subsequently upgraded to Tier 1, in 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.*

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<sup>6</sup> see: <https://www.sdg6monitoring.org/about/integrated-monitoring-initiative/>

## 2. Objectives of the online workshop

The focus of this online workshop is on **supporting countries** in the “SDG Regions”: South-eastern Asia, Eastern Asia, Southern Asia, and Oceania<sup>7</sup> **to collect, report and make use of data for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reporting exercise on SDG indicator 6.5.2 measuring progress in transboundary water cooperation.**

In view of the ongoing second reporting exercise, the workshop will in particular:

- Introduce the methodology for calculation of the value of indicator 6.5.2 and the guidance documents materials for reporting;
- Highlight good practices and discuss challenges in completing the 6.5.2 questionnaire, both from an organizational and institutional point of view (process) and for the calculation of the indicator (data availability and methods);
- Identify gaps of data, in particular concerning aquifers, with emphasis on the component dedicated to improve the participation of Member States in the second monitoring cycle of the indicator 6.5.2;
- Identify synergies between reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 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;
- Discuss how to benefit from and use the reporting process and cooperation actions that could improve transboundary water cooperation by 2030;
- Discuss the role of partners in supporting countries in their reporting efforts.
- Increase the rate of responses and the quality of reports in the second reporting exercise in 2020.

## 3. Work methodology

The online workshop will be divided in three main sessions, taking place on one day. In the first part, participants and custodian agencies will **share experiences about the regional monitoring and review of SDG 6 in Asia and the Pacific and about transboundary water cooperation, considering the lessons learn in the first reporting of SDG indicators 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 and status of reporting for the second reporting exercise.** It will stress on the step-by-step methodology document, and template for the reporting of the monitoring of the indicator 6.5.2. Regional organizations involved in transboundary water cooperation will also present good practices in the region. This will be the opportunity for the participants to clarify the main methodological issue in terms of calculation of the indicator, data availability and process.

The second session will be organised in an engaging way to **stimulate a brain storming and discussions to identify the main challenges and possible support for the participation of Member States in the monitoring report process.** Participants will have the opportunity to present and share an overview of the situation of transboundary river/lakes/aquifers in their countries, looking especially at data availability. Interaction with custodian agencies will allow providing support to ensure reporting quality.

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<sup>7</sup> Papua New Guinea is the only country sharing waters from Oceania region.

The last session will mainly aim to harvest the workshop results where the main suggestions, lessons learnt and methods to improve engagement in the reporting process and conclusions of the interactive sessions will be shared in a short final joint plenary discussion.

#### 4. Participants

The workshop is targeted to experts responsible for completing the reporting template or coordinating the reporting process on SDG indicator 6.5.2. All countries sharing transboundary waters in the SDG regions South-eastern Asia, Eastern Asia, Southern Asia, and Oceania are being invited.

#### 5. Practical information

The workshop will be held online on 17 September 2020 via an online platform, details on the platform and the connexion details will be shared early September 2020.

Participants are kindly requested to register through the following link: <https://bit.ly/2YIWU8I>

For any substantial question on the meeting, please do not hesitate to contact UNECE and UNESCO, respectively at [transboundary\\_water\\_cooperation\\_reporting@un.org](mailto:transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting@un.org) and [transboundary\\_water\\_cooperation\\_reporting@unesco.org](mailto:transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting@unesco.org)

Further information and relevant material will be made available on the following website in due course: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=54939>.

#### 6. Annexes and other resources:

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

- [www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicator-652](http://www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicator-652)
- [www.unece.org/water/transboundary\\_water\\_cooperation\\_reporting.html](http://www.unece.org/water/transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting.html)
- <https://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/hydrology>
  
- Provisional Agenda of the Asia online regional workshop supporting the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs : transboundary water cooperation SDG 6 indicator 6.5.2
- Template of the second reporting exercise on SDG indicator 6.5.2 [www.unwater.org/publications/step-step-methodology-monitoring-transboundary-cooperation-6-5-2/](http://www.unwater.org/publications/step-step-methodology-monitoring-transboundary-cooperation-6-5-2/)
- Step-by-step methodology of SDG 6.5.2 indicator (revised version “2020”): [https://www.unwater.org/app/uploads/2020/02/SDG\\_652\\_Step-by-step\\_methodology\\_2020\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.unwater.org/app/uploads/2020/02/SDG_652_Step-by-step_methodology_2020_ENG.pdf)
- Guide to reporting under the Water Convention and as a contribution to SDG indicator 6.5.2 [www.unece.org/index.php?id=53745](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=53745)
- 2018 Report on the first SDG indicator 6.5.2 reporting exercise “Progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation: Global baseline for SDG indicator 6.5.2”: <http://www.unwater.org/publications/progress-on-transboundary-water-cooperation-652>
- Webinars on SDG 6.5.2 in English, French, Russian and Spanish, section “VI. Videos”: [www.unece.org/water/transboundary\\_water\\_cooperation\\_reporting.html](http://www.unece.org/water/transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting.html)