

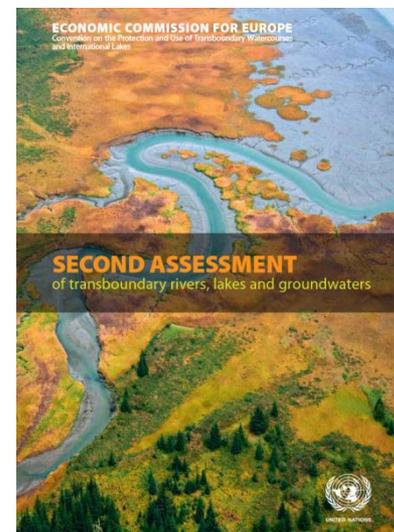
Third Assessment of transboundary waters

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Background to assessments under the Water Convention

- * Among the Convention's obligations: **Carry out at regular intervals joint or coordinated assessments** of the conditions of transboundary waters and the effectiveness of measures taken (Art 11)
- * In 2003 the Parties to the Water Convention decided to regularly carry out **regional assessments**: First Assessment in 2007, Second Assessment in 2011
- * Foundation laid with **monitoring and assessment guidelines** published for different types of waters and **pilot projects** supporting implementation (1996-2006)



Rationale and benefits of comprehensive assessments

- * **Keep the status of waters under scrutiny**, to define a baseline & measure long-term progress.
- * **Support cooperation, management of transboundary waters & application/implementation of the Convention.** Coordinated or joint assessments have traditionally been the basis for developing cooperation. This is particularly useful in basins where there is no joint institution.
- * **Promote exchange of experience and good practices, capacity-building, progressive harmonization, promoting cooperation, through both political and technical dialogue**
- * Convene Parties, non-Parties (including potential will-be Parties) and others to **discuss about emerging challenges in managing transboundary waters and possible responses.** Non-Parties have also conveyed their issues & shape the assessment ->Global coverage is therefore in line with the Convention's opening
- * **Inform work and activities** under the Convention and of other actors supporting transboundary water cooperation
- * Assessments of the status of waters and trends (pressure-impact relationships) **complement the reporting** under the Convention (national legislation and measures, cooperation)
- * The main **added value** compared to other initiatives: the focus on transboundary waters, the intergovernmental nature and the joint/participatory process (i.e. not a desk or expert study)

Progress and activities in this area of work in late 2016-2017

- * Initial discussion about the needs and the approach in the Bureau and in the Working Group on IWRM in October 2017*
- * Expert Group met from 9 to 10 May 2017 to hear expectations from countries, review relevant related initiatives and develop the scope and main features of the assessment*
- * Draft concept prepared to inform the discussion at the Working Group on IWRM (WG.1/2017/INF.4)*

Geographical scope & approach to basin/aquifer identification

- * A participatory assessment, based on countries' data, information and joint assessment, of **15-20 surface water basins (or sub-basins) and/or aquifers around the world**; about one third to a half the UNECE region and from a half to two thirds from Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- * A **demand-driven** process of basin identification in the form of an **open call**:
 1. Countries invited to participate and propose basins to be assessed and the thematic focus of the assessment
 - Preferably the proponent riparian to reach out to co-riparians. Ideally joint submissions co-riparian countries. Possible involvement of UNECE, regional organization, partners to foster involvement of all riparians?
 2. Interested basin organizations and regional organizations encouraged to support the process
- * The objective of the selection should be to have a **balanced geographical representation and a good illustration of the main challenges** in management of transboundary waters, climatic zones and institutional settings

Methodological approach and links to other areas or work and processes

- * The **methodological approach** will build on previous assessments, employing the Driving force, Pressure, State, Impact and Response (**DPSIR framework**), and integrates elements from the Convention's work on water and climate, the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus and benefits of transboundary cooperation.
- * **A common methodology but a flexible approach** that will be **adjusted according to data availability and ambition of the riparian countries**, from 1) a mostly qualitative and descriptive approach employing e.g. expert judgment to 2) a more quantitative (and ideally harmonized basin-wide) approach.
- * The assessment will not produce new data but will build on existing global and national data and promote data elaboration, visualization, analysis and uptake in cooperation processes. It **will build on, complement and enrich other monitoring processes**, in particular the monitoring of the SDG 6 indicators
- * The Assessment should be supported by **a strong consortium of partners at the regional and global level**. The process will draw upon the convening power and acquired assessment experience of the Water Convention and its partners (other regional commissions or regional organizations, international specialized agencies)

Substantive scope

- * **Basic information with a consistent approach** for all the basins.
- * In addition, a **selected thematic focus** jointly decided by the riparian countries. The proposed themes: 1) Climate change, hydrological extremes and resilience; 2) Intersectoral issues/energy and/or agriculture; 3) Water quality (wastewater, diffuse pollution, mining or others); 4) Ecosystems and their services.
- * **Pressures and the status of waters will be linked to measures** taken and evolution of cooperation to form **storylines** that demonstrate the effectiveness (or not) of actions and the value of (or a need for) cooperation.
- * An analysis **drawing lessons of wide interest** from all the basins on the different thematic issues -> a relevant and useful exercise beyond the basins concerned

Modality of working with the countries

At the basin level:

- * Identification of focal persons/country teams
- * Refinement of the thematic focus among the riparians
- * Identification of key information and data sources by the countries. A tiered approach to adjust to different data availability.
- * Prefilling the information into a questionnaire
- * Review and completing by the riparians
- * Assessment workshop (for a basin or for >2 basins at the regional level) to discuss the draft assessment (including visual components) and agree on how to further develop it. The participating countries and/or basins invited to consider organising additional meetings.
- * Completion of the draft basin assessment based on workshop outcomes and additional information collected & sending for review by the riparians

In addition:

- * Yearly intergovernmental consultations and exchange of experience in the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment
- * Analysis of the basin assessments, drawing lessons and producing a summary for the MoP or other pertinent forum.

Benefits for the countries

- * A **participatory and interactive process, promoting dialogues, exchange and cooperation** at both the basin and inter-basin / global level. Therefore, a strong **capacity building dimension**.
- * It will provide a **process for** identifying and agreeing on common challenges in selected basins, for **developing a shared understanding of the status and for agreeing about follow up** -> The basis for starting cooperation or feed official cooperation processes to respond to emerging needs.
- * The Assessment will also **facilitate the identification of opportunities** for cooperative activities, e.g. developing joint projects, including investment opportunities on themes of common interest.
- * The process will draw upon the **convening power** and acquired assessment experience of the Water Convention and its partners.
- * The link to the Water Convention's intergovernmental framework will allow **political and technical follow up**, including responses from other actors / donors

Estimated costs: basic version and version with more in-depth & extended basin level process and participation

Process component/cost item	USD – basic	USD – upgraded
(1+2) Personnel costs: manager, a junior professional, administrator	946,800	1,214,400
(3) Meeting w/ experts & partners for refining the methodology, format...	60,000	60,000
(4) Consultancy for developing a methodology tailored for this assessment	20,000	20,000
(5) Pilot data collection in a basin; workshop plus a light analysis & write up	50,000	100,000
(6) Basin-level process: working meetings (19 basins) +data collection	570,000	1,140,000
(7) Basin analysis (a simple write up of information & a desk study)	285,000	570,000
(8) Organization of two sessions of WGMA for a review & endorsement	120,000	120,000
(9) Consultancy fees for the cross-basin analysis, including graphics, etc	45,000	70,000
(10) Consultancy fees for the finalization, editing the report, layout	35,000	35,000
(11) Consultancy fees for the production of maps and graphics	130,000	130,000
(12) Production of the publication: printing, online version (w/ data, maps)	80,000	390,000
(13) Dissemination travel (1 per region or 1 per basin)	12,000	60,000
Project support costs (13%)	306,000	508,200
Total	2,659,800	4,417,600

Partners in a crucial role

The role of partners – from joint bodies, to regional and international organizations, think-tank and research centers – will be crucial, **for expertise and experience, fostering synergies**

Partners could, for example, contribute to the following stages:

- * Contribute to refining the methodological approach
- * Cooperate in the identification of basins and specification of the thematic foci
- * Provide data and information
- * Organize/co-organize workshops, either for developing the assessment, or for discussing the conclusions.
- * Fund-raise jointly based on synergies identified
- * Promote and use the results of the assessment in the work.

Different levels of involvement of partners are possible but a **common product** would be the preferred aim

Proposed next steps in 2017-2018

- * **5-6 July 2017: Discussion of the preliminary concept** at the meeting of the WG IWRM.
- * **By 31 August 2017: More detailed comments in writing on the draft concept** by countries, joint bodies and potential partner organizations
- * **By 30 September 2017: Call launched for expressions of interest** by interested countries or channelled through joint bodies (for submission by 15 November 2017)
- * **August 2017 – January 2018: Consultations with potentially interested countries, joint bodies and partners. Further development of the concept** (structure, content, basins)
- * **By 31 December 2017: A revised concept with a preliminary list of the basins & aquifers**
- * **21-22 February 2018: Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Monitoring and Assessment convened to review the concept and refine it**, with close involvement of countries / basins potentially involved
- * **19 March 2018: Elaborated concept & process for consideration by the WG IWRM**
- * **29-30 May 2018: Further discussions at the WG IWRM**
- * **October 2018: Decision on the production of the Assessment by the Meeting of the Parties, including list of basins included.**
- * **Report not before 2021** (timeline to be detailed when resource contributions etc. clear)

Questions to be discussed by the Working Group 1: Structure and content

- * Is the **overall structure** of the Third Assessment suitable? Is there anything essential missing?
- * Are the **thematic focal areas** proposed above the appropriate ones?
- * Should **water-dependent ecosystems** be described also in basins which have not chosen that specific thematic focus? If yes, how exactly that should be done?

Questions to be discussed by the Working Group 2: Process

- * Is the **geographic scope** adequate? Is the ratio between basins shared by Parties and basins shared by non-Parties appropriate? How will it be possible to also attract and support basins in which the cooperation between the riparians is a challenge?
- * Is the outlined **process of preparation** appropriate and responding to the objectives of the Assessment?
- * What should **the role of the civil society**, and NGOs in particular, be in the assessment process?
- * Which **partners** are interested to further engage and support the process? What should be the next steps to define the partnership?