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the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes

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Item 18 of the provisional agenda

**Programme of work for 2022–2024, terms of reference
of the bodies established to implement it and
resources needed for its implementation**

Draft programme of work for 2022–2024

Prepared by the Bureau with the support of the secretariat



Summary

The present document presents the proposed activities under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) for the period 2022–2024, the bodies that will support their implementation and estimates of the human and financial resources required.

The document was prepared by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, with the support of the secretariat. It was discussed, amended and endorsed by the third joint meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva, 26–28 April 2021), which entrusted the Bureau with the task of finalizing it in the light of the comments received and submitting it for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its ninth session.^a

The draft programme of work was developed in a consultative manner, considering suggestions brought forward by different intergovernmental bodies, outcomes of activities under the Convention and a survey among countries and partners on priorities of work under the Convention for 2022–2024.

The Meeting of the Parties is invited to:

- (a) Thank the Parties, other States and other stakeholders that provided leadership and support to the activities that form the basis of the draft programme of work;
- (b) Convey its appreciation to the Parties that have already expressed their readiness to take the lead in the implementation of the draft programme of work;
- (c) Encourage Parties and other States to indicate at the ninth session their willingness to lead, contribute to — including financially — or participate in the implementation of the various activities of the programme of work;
- (d) Encourage other stakeholders (for example, non-governmental and international organizations) to indicate at the ninth session their willingness to contribute to — including financially — or participate in the implementation of the various elements of the programme of work;
- (e) Examine the draft programme of work and its budget, particularly on the basis of the outcomes of discussions under the various items of the provisional agenda, and to amend it as needed, taking into account:
 - (i) The priority and strategic importance of the proposed activities;
 - (ii) The availability of leadership;
 - (iii) The availability of resources;
- (f) Adopt the programme of work and its budget as amended at the ninth session, and to entrust the Bureau and the secretariat with the task of estimating costs for those activities that need further definition;
- (g) Consider, on the basis of the agreed programme of work, the need to revise the terms of reference of the subsidiary bodies designated to implement it;
- (h) Call on Parties, other States and relevant organizations to actively contribute to the activities contained in the programme of work, including through financial and in-kind contributions.

^a. See Unedited list of decisions, para. 19 (e), under tab entitled “Outcomes of the meeting”, available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/water/events/3rd-Joint-meeting-WGIWRM-and-WGMA>, and ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2021/2–ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2021/2 (forthcoming).

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I. Rationale, structure and objectives of the programme of work

A. Background

1. While water is critical to progress regarding the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and is considered to be one of the most pressing challenges facing humankind, efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) are alarmingly off-track.
2. More than 60 per cent of global freshwater flow is in transboundary basins. Transboundary river and lake basins account for nearly half of the Earth's land surface, and 40 per cent of the world's population live in shared basins. More than 600 aquifers are shared. These shared waters create environmental, social, economic and political interdependencies.
3. Transboundary water cooperation is therefore vital in preventing conflicts, promoting sustainable development and increasing climate change resilience. This important role was recognized by the inclusion of transboundary water cooperation in target 6.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
4. However, transboundary waters in many areas of the world are not used sustainably and the situation is projected to worsen in the coming decades owing to increasing pressures from population growth, agriculture and energy production, as well as from impacts of climate change.
5. As demonstrated by the reporting on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals and on the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), cooperation in many transboundary basins is not adequate to tackle the existing and emerging challenges. So far, only 24 out of the 153 countries sharing transboundary waters have achieved target 6.5.2, a much lower rate than for most other target indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 6. A significant acceleration of progress is therefore urgently required in order to ensure that all transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers are covered by operational arrangements, in line with the Secretary-General's Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework¹ launched by UN-Water in 2020.
6. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has demonstrated the importance of an integrated approach to water management, including the protection of ecosystems, and the crucial role of regional and transboundary cooperation, for example, in ensuring access to water and sanitation for all. It has also led to additional challenges, for example, in financing transboundary water cooperation.
7. The Water Convention provides a unique global legal and intergovernmental framework for promoting transboundary water cooperation, the sustainable management of shared water resources, stability and peace.
8. The year 2022 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. Over this period, the Convention has proven its effectiveness. It has fostered the development of agreements, the establishment of joint bodies and the strengthening of cooperation at both the political and technical levels, initially in the pan-European region and, more recently, in other regions. It has also strengthened national water governance and regional integration.
9. Since 2016, the Convention, for which the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) provides the secretariat, has become a global convention open to accession by all States Members of the United Nations. Countries from different regions of the world have acceded to the instrument, including several African countries. The present programme of work is the second serving a global Convention.

¹ See www.unwater.org/publications/the-sdg-6-global-acceleration-framework/

B. Relevance to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global and regional commitments

10. The Water Convention is a powerful tool that contributes to promoting and operationalizing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. It plays a key role in accelerating progress in transboundary cooperation. It directly supports implementation of target 6.5, which calls upon all States, by 2030, to implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

11. The Convention offers a framework for tracking global progress on transboundary water cooperation, discussing common challenges and defining responses. Indeed, the reporting on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals² is linked to the reporting under the Convention for Parties.

12. The Convention and its programme of work are also relevant for other Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including the following: all the other targets of Goal 6, Goal 2 (zero hunger), Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy) and Goal 15 (life on land) through, for instance, the work on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus; Goal 3 (good health and well-being), through activities in cooperation with the Protocol on Water and Health; target 11.5 (reducing the impact of disasters, in particular water-related disasters) and Goal 13 (climate action), through activities on water and climate; and in general for Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and Goal 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

13. The programme of work will also support implementation of:

(a) The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20–22 June 2012), “The future we want”;³

(b) The International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028;

(c) The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework as part of the Secretary-General’s Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030;⁴

(d) The Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),⁵ the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development⁶ and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030;⁷

(e) Regional commitments on water, such as the outcomes of the Environment for Europe ministerial conferences,⁸ the Council of the European Union conclusions on European Union water diplomacy⁹ and the African Water Vision 2025;¹⁰

(f) The future post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030.¹¹

² The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat of the Convention and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have been designated as co-custodian agencies for indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

³ See A/RES/66/288, annex.

⁴ The programme of work mainly supports the accelerators, governance, data and information, finance and capacity-building.

⁵ See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

⁶ See A/RES/69/313, annex.

⁷ See A/RES/69/283, annex II.

⁸ See www.unece.org/env/efe/welcome.html.

⁹ See www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/138253.pdf.

¹⁰ Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)/African Union/African Development Bank, *Africa Water Vision for 2025: Equitable and Sustainable Use of Water for Socioeconomic Development* (Addis Ababa, ECA, 2003).

¹¹ See www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/index.html.

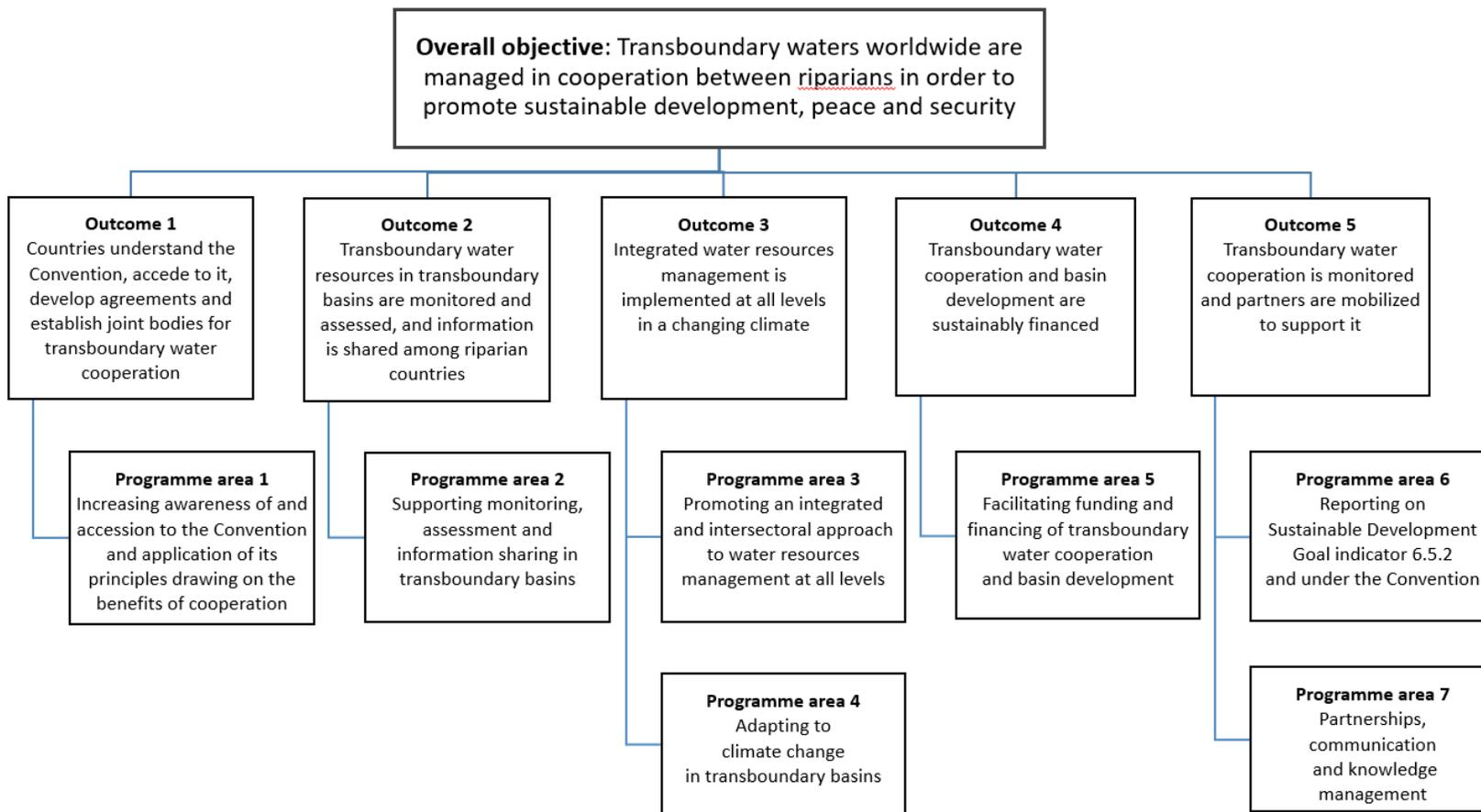
C. Objective and structure of the programme of work

14. The main aim of the programme of work is to support implementation of the Convention and its principles. It supports transboundary water cooperation and the sustainable management of shared water resources. The programme of work operationalizes the Vision for the future of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2) and the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2), adopted by the Meeting of the Parties respectively at its sixth (Rome, 28–30 November 2012) and eighth (Nur-Sultan, 10–12 October 2018) sessions.

15. Consistent with the Strategy, the overall objective of the programme of work is to ensure that transboundary waters worldwide are managed in cooperation between riparian countries in order to promote sustainable development, peace and security.

16. Activities in the programme of work are organized in programme areas that represent key results for successful transboundary cooperation. The programme areas in turn sustain specific outcomes that contribute to the overall objective of the programme of work (and ultimately of the Convention) (see figure below).

Logic and structure of the programme of work



17. The programme areas are closely interlinked. For instance, work on monitoring and assessment is linked to all other programme areas: it supports the development of agreements, lays the basis for integrated water resources management and adapting to climate change and allows linking reporting under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 to the impacts of cooperation and the status of water resources. Financing is also a basic requirement for all activities. Linkages and synergies between different programme areas will be strengthened. Linkages are mentioned in the different programme areas, and events, such as regional capacity-building events, may be organized with sessions focused on different programme areas, depending on demand and regional priorities.

18. The types of activities in the programme of work include a combination of: guidance development; exchange of experience and capacity-building; political advocacy, communication and input to regional and global processes; monitoring, assessments and preparation of reports/ publications; and projects on the ground. The aim is to foster progress at both the policy and technical levels, from the national and basin levels to the global level. The Convention being global, activities can be implemented in different regions worldwide, based on demands and provided that funds are available. Specific activities of the programme of work, including basins flagged for possible projects on the ground, were identified through a consultative process, considering suggestions brought forward by different intergovernmental bodies, the continuation of ongoing activities, the outcomes of activities under the Convention and a survey among countries and partners on priorities of work under the Convention for 2022–2024. Depending on the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, some activities and events will be organized virtually.

19. Certain topics will be mainstreamed into the entire programme of work, for example, gender. Gender mainstreaming is important to ensure participation of both women and men in transboundary water cooperation and decision-making. Gender will be mainstreamed, for example, by promoting participation of women in the Convention's bodies and capacity-building events, in pilot projects and other activities, as well as by including gender considerations in publications developed under the Convention.

II. Bodies to implement the programme of work for 2022–2024

A. Bureau

20. In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the Meetings of the Parties, the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties is composed of no fewer than eight persons, including the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs of the Meeting of the Parties, the Chairs of the working groups and, if applicable, other officers elected by the Meeting of the Parties (see ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2).

21. The main responsibilities of the Bureau include: (a) making arrangements to further develop the workplan, adapting it to changing circumstances, clarifying, adding or skipping activities and avoiding, to the extent possible, duplication of efforts with water-related activities of other United Nations bodies and other international organizations; (b) taking initiatives to strengthen implementation of the Convention; and (c) carrying out other tasks entrusted to it by the Meeting of the Parties.

B. Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment

22. The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment are the two main subsidiary bodies established by the Meeting of the Parties.

23. The two working groups are responsible for the implementation of the relevant activities under the various programme areas of the programme of work. They examine experience and draw up draft recommendations, codes of practice and other soft law instruments. They also review policies, strategies and methodologies of relevance to the

protection and use of waters and examine the implications thereof. The working groups also assist the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health, if applicable, in developing response measures and in promoting the harmonization of rules and regulations on specific areas.

24. In between sessions of the Meetings of the Parties, the two working groups provide guidance regarding the implementation of the programme of work. They may advise the Bureau to make arrangements to further develop the programme of work, to adapt it to changing circumstances and to avoid, to the extent possible, duplication of efforts with water-related activities of other United Nations bodies and other international organizations.

25. The working groups also take initiatives to strengthen the application of the Convention, including the preparation of draft decisions, proposals and recommendations, and a draft programme of work for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties. They also mobilize resources to support the implementation of the programme of work.

26. Each working group may formulate recommendations related to the work of the other. They may also meet jointly or back-to-back to exploit synergies.

27. The focus of the work of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management is on intersectoral activities to support the implementation of the Convention regarding the integrated management of transboundary water resources (surface waters and groundwaters). Activities under this Working Group aim to: prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts, as defined in the Convention; promote the ecosystem approach in the framework of integrated water resources management; and promote equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary waters. Further goals are to: advance adaptation to climate change in the transboundary context; promote understanding of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus and the reconciliation of multiple water uses in transboundary basins; advance the understanding of the benefits of transboundary cooperation; prevent accidental water pollution; and facilitate the financing of transboundary water cooperation and reporting under the Convention and on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Working Group also seeks to build and strengthen the institutions responsible for the management of transboundary waters, to facilitate the work of joint bodies and to promote public participation in decision-making. The Working Group will be co-chaired by Germany and another country to be confirmed.

28. The Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment aims to assist countries in establishing and implementing joint programmes for monitoring and assessing the pressures on and the conditions of transboundary waters, including floods and ice drifts, as well as transboundary impacts. Furthermore, it plays a leading role in preparing periodic assessments of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters, which allows for measurement of progress in the implementation of the Convention. The Working Group also seeks to: promote the exchange of data on transboundary waters; encourage Parties to inform each other about any critical situation that may have a transboundary impact; support exchange of experience on water allocation in a transboundary context; and make available to the public information on transboundary waters. The Working Group will be co-chaired by Finland and Senegal.

Resource requirements¹² for meetings of the Bureau and the two working groups: \$738,000.

C. Implementation Committee

29. In accordance with paragraph 1 of decision VI/1 of the Meeting of the Parties on support to implementation and compliance (ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2), the Implementation Committee facilitates, promotes and safeguards the implementation and application of and compliance with the Convention. It carries out the functions assigned to it in decision VI/1

¹² The estimated costs shown here are limited to those intended to be covered by voluntary contributions, either through the Convention's trust fund or in kind; they do not include costs that are expected to be covered by the United Nations regular budget or other sources. Overhead costs are not included.

or by the Meeting of the Parties at its subsequent sessions and reports to the Meeting of the Parties accordingly.

D. Legal Board

30. The Legal Board deals with legal questions related to the work under the Convention, upon the request of other Convention bodies. In the triennium 2022–2024, no activity is under the direct responsibility of the Legal Board; thus, it will only meet if the need arises.

E. Task Force on Water and Climate and Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation

31. The Task Force on Water and Climate, with the Netherlands and Switzerland as the lead Parties, is responsible for activities related to adaptation to climate change, including flood and drought management.

32. The Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation promotes exchange of experience and cross-fertilization between the basins in the network.

F. Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus

33. The Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus, with Finland as the lead Party, is responsible for activities related to the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus and water allocation.

G. International Water Assessment Centre

34. The International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) is the Convention's collaborative centre and is currently hosted by Kazakhstan. In accordance with its terms of reference (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2017/4), the overall objective of the Centre is to support implementation of the Convention and, as relevant, its Protocol on Water and Health, and their programmes of work. The Centre's programme of work is developed in consultation between the Government of Kazakhstan, the Bureau and the secretariat.

H. Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

35. The Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) was established under the Water Convention and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) to support work in the area of accidental water pollution.

36. The work of the Joint Expert Group is regulated by its strategy adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its fifth session (Geneva, 10–12 November 2009) (see ECE/MP.WAT/29/Add.2). The Joint Expert Group is currently co-led by Hungary and Serbia.

III. Areas of work and activities

A. Programme area 1: Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation

Responsible bodies: The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, national focal points, the Bureau and the secretariat.

Rationale: Since the global opening of the Convention, an increasing number of countries have started national processes of accession and requested support. However, in many countries, the Convention is still not sufficiently well-known. Additionally, many new Parties also continue to seek support in their efforts to implement the Convention's principles. Accession of new countries needs to be scaled up together with the implementation of the Convention's principles. It is particularly important to support the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies and to enhance understanding of the benefits of transboundary water cooperation.

Objectives: Foster the application of the principles of the Convention and the improvement of cooperation on the management of transboundary waters by:

- Increasing awareness of and political support for the Convention and for transboundary water cooperation.
- Increasing accession to the Convention and, as appropriate, to the Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention), promoting synergies between the two conventions.
- Highlighting the broad range of benefits that can be generated by cooperation and cooperative solutions.
- Contributing to trust-building and transboundary dialogues on the management of transboundary waters.
- Supporting negotiation processes on transboundary waters through the Convention and its tools.
- Supporting countries in developing or revising agreements or arrangements in transboundary basins.

1.1 Increasing capacity for implementation of the Convention and supporting national processes towards accession

Lead Parties: Finland, France, Germany, Ghana and Hungary.

Work to be undertaken

1.1.1 Raising awareness and knowledge of the Convention

Focal points, the Bureau and the secretariat will promote the Convention, its activities and the guidelines developed thereunder on relevant occasions, including through the organization of presentations, sessions and/or side events at up to 10 global and regional meetings, such as the World Water Forum, World Water Week, Africa Water Week, Arab Water Week, the Asia-Pacific Water Forum, etc.

The Convention will be promoted in cooperation and by strengthening synergies with activities of other regional and global partners. Cooperation arrangements will be developed with such partners, as appropriate.

Two training sessions for practitioners will be organized to strengthen the capacity of key actors and experts involved in transboundary water cooperation and to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to promote and apply the Convention. The Convention will also provide partners with the necessary documentation for their promotional activities.

The Convention will organize one or two Convention-led workshops/training sessions on the global water conventions and international water law. Focal points, the Bureau and the secretariat will also contribute to international water law training sessions organized by partners. In addition, the Convention will facilitate access to online training sessions, videos and materials on transboundary water cooperation and international water law by making available existing online materials and tools on the Convention's website with links to partners' platforms (for example, the massive open online courses of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) on transboundary freshwater security and of the University of Geneva).

Specific communication materials will be produced, such as brochures. This will include the development of a study documenting the Convention's impact in different regions, to support

countries in understanding the benefits of acceding thereto. The resulting publication will be translated and printed in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

In all the above-mentioned activities, where appropriate, the Water Convention will be promoted together with the Watercourses Convention.

1.1.2 Supporting accession to and implementation of the Water Convention for new Parties

Upon request, support will be provided to countries to accede to the Convention and to implement it, including through the development of national implementation plans. Such support will include the provision of legal and technical advice to understand the Convention's provisions and to implement national-level interventions to integrate transboundary water cooperation aspects into the national legal and institutional framework. Up to seven national tailor-made workshops will be organized to build capacity on the Convention and its implementation, and to discuss the benefits of accession and the following steps.

In addition, up to four regional, subregional and basin events on the Convention will be organized in Africa, Asia and Latin America to prompt basin or regional dynamics towards accession to the Convention and application of its principles.

Exchange of experience will be fostered to benefit from good practices worldwide, in particular through the twinning of countries working on accession with Parties, or new Parties with experienced Parties.

Additional activities in this area are included in the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level.

Resource requirements for activity 1.1: \$1,732,000.

1.2 Promoting and communicating the benefits of transboundary cooperation

Lead Party: Estonia.

Work to be undertaken

The broad range of benefits that transboundary water cooperation can generate will be promoted under various activities under the Convention, on the basis of the *Policy Guidance Note on the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation: Identification, Assessment and Communication*¹³ and building on experience of benefit assessment exercises previously carried out in various basins.

This will be done by designing training modules in/facilitating dialogues with a "benefit lens" under activities promoting accession to the Convention (activity 1.1). It will also consist of providing assistance to up to three basin-level projects carried out under activities 1.3, 3.2 or 4.1 or programme area 5.

Resource requirements for activity 1.2: \$158,500.

1.3 Supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies

Lead Parties: Germany and Hungary.

Work to be undertaken

The Practical guide on the development of agreements and other arrangements for transboundary water cooperation (forthcoming) will be further developed into an online toolkit, with good practices collected, links to agreements, etc.

Two regional or basin workshops on developing agreements and establishing joint bodies will be organized to support cooperation processes, promoting tools developed under the Convention, such as the Practical guide on the development of agreements and other

¹³ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/47.

arrangements for transboundary water cooperation and the *Principles for Effective Joint Bodies for Transboundary Water Cooperation under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*,¹⁴ and facilitating the exchange of experiences.

Upon request from the concerned countries and pending the availability of dedicated resources, a number of basin-level projects on transboundary water cooperation supporting the development of agreements and establishment/ strengthening of institutions and/or the development or implementation of Strategic Action Programmes, where they exist, will be implemented, including building on the benefits of transboundary cooperation and with due account taken of gender mainstreaming. Possible basins for the implementation of such projects include the Lake Chad basin and the Lake Kivu/Ruzizi River basin, the Bug-Neman, Chu-Talas, Comoé-Bia-Tanoé, Dniester, Drin, Euphrates and Tigris, Gambia, Kura, Mejerda, Mono, Motagua, Ogooué-Ntem-Nyanga-Komo, Okavango-Cubango, Prut, Rio Jurado, Tisza and Volta River basins, as well as the Ocatepeque and Senegalo-Mauritanian aquifer basins and the Trifinio region. Assistance to some of these basins will be carried out in coordination with activity 3.4 and other programme areas, as relevant.

Activities will also include support to regional cooperation, such as work on dam safety and water quality in Central Asia, support to regional economic communities in Africa – for instance to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) – and in Latin America – for instance to the Central American Commission on Environment and Development of the Central American Integration System (CCAD/SICA) – for the development of regional frameworks for water cooperation.

Resource requirements for activity 1.3: \$352,000.

1.4 Implementation Committee

Work to be undertaken

The work of the Implementation Committee will be governed by decision VI/1. Within its mandate, the Committee will support countries in their efforts to implement and comply with the Convention, including through the provision of advice in the framework of the advisory procedure. The Committee will promote the implementation mechanism and its use through communication efforts and specific events. It will also support the secretariat in answering questions from countries interested in accession and contribute to activities related to promotion of accession to the Convention and interpretation of its provisions.

Resource requirements for activity 1.4: \$205,500.

Possible partners: Academia (University of Geneva/Geneva Water Hub, University of Northumbria (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)), the Water Diplomacy Centre of Jordan University of Science and Technology, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Conference of Ibero-American Water Directors, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) project, GWP and its regional water partnerships, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), non-governmental organizations (such as the African Network of Basin Organizations, Green Cross International, the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)), regional economic communities in Africa and Latin America (such as ECOWAS, ECCAS, IGAD and CCAD/SICA), regional intergovernmental organizations (such as the African Ministers' Council on Water, the League of Arab States, the Organization of American States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Southern African Development Community), river basin organizations (such as the Dniester Basin Commission, the Gambia River Basin Development Organization, the Mono Basin Authority, the Niger Basin Authority, the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM), the Organization for the

¹⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.II.E.10.

Development of the Senegal River (OMVS) and the Volta Basin Authority), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), United Nations country teams, departments and agencies (such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), United Nations regional commissions and the World Bank.

B. Programme area 2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins

Responsible body: The Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

Lead Parties: Finland and Senegal.

Rationale: Joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters and information exchange are among the key obligations under the Convention. Initiating information exchange is fundamental for developing cooperation. Comparable information across a transboundary basin or aquifer is necessary to form a common basis for management and related decision-making. In practice, this requires harmonized and comparable methods for monitoring and assessment. This also requires information exchange and shared information systems, including appropriate data management and uniform procedures. The guidance developed under the Convention, including the publication *Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters*,¹⁵ and technical guidance on transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters,¹⁶ promote a step-by-step approach, facilitating progressive improvement, as well as linking the definition of information needs to water management issues. However, significant challenges remain in the areas of exchange of information and data, as well as of monitoring and assessment.

Objectives: Support countries in initiating or further developing joint or coordinated monitoring and assessment of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters, covering both water quantity and quality aspects, and improving exchange of information and data between riparian countries.

Work to be undertaken

Good practices and lessons learned in transboundary data exchange will be collected – considering, for example, the acquisition and collection of data, their harmonization and management – and synthesized in a publication. The *Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* will be updated as a global edition, translated and printed in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Selected technical transboundary monitoring and assessment guidelines previously developed under the Convention will be used to: strengthen the *Strategies* publication with specifics of different waters (groundwaters, lakes and rivers), references to other guidelines, etc. and global data sources; and provide structure and input to the good practices publication to be produced.

Up to three training or regional workshops/sessions on monitoring, information and data will be organized to: raise awareness about the approach to monitoring and assessment under the Convention; learn about regional experiences; and collect additional insights for the *Strategies* publication.

Tailored assistance and support for developing joint or coordinated monitoring or information and data exchange will be provided upon request and pending the availability of dedicated resources, including application of the strategic and technical guidelines on monitoring and assessment in transboundary basins, such as in the Drin River basin and in the Senegalo-Mauritanian aquifer basin.

¹⁵ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/20.

¹⁶ Available at www.unece.org/environment-policy/water/monitoring-assessment-and-information-sharing-transboundary-basins.

Synergy will be sought with other programme areas, notably with National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management (activity 3.4), to support monitoring and assessment activities, including potential assistance in the Ktsia/Khrami-Debed River basin.

Resource requirements for programme area 2: \$561,000.

Possible partners: GWP, Environment Agency Austria (UBA), INBO, IWAC, UNEP, the World Bank the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Zoï Environment Network.

C. Programme area 3: Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water resources management at all levels

Responsible bodies: The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus for activities 3.2 and 3.3.

Rationale: Integrated water resources management is a universally recognized best practice, which involves coordination among different uses and users of water from different sectors to maximize economic and social benefits without damaging the sustainability of ecosystems. Sustainable water management lies at the core of the Convention. The adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 6, and specifically its target 6.5 aiming to implement integrated water resources management at all levels, underlines the importance of further promoting this approach and balancing different water sector needs and environmental requirements.

In transboundary settings, not addressing trade-offs and externalities from sectoral development, commonly reflected as water demands or impacts on shared water resources, may result in friction between countries and reduced trust. By building on an improved understanding of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins and by considering intersectoral impacts from policies and other sectoral developments beyond water management, more sustainable and collaborative ways of development can be found. This makes it possible to identify cooperative nexus solutions and investments that can provide benefits for multiple sectors and motivate cooperation. While such broader approaches can provide solutions, knowledge about mechanisms, tools and practices in water allocation worldwide provides specific possibilities to address water availability issues.

Objectives:

- Support the development of transboundary basin management strategies, joint objectives or plans (or elements for such plans), in line with the Convention and the principles of integrated water resources management.
- Support conjunctive management of surface waters and groundwaters, as well as the source-to-sea approach.
- Support the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity in transboundary basins.
- Support the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach, including the operationalization of nexus solutions and investments as well as regional/basin level strategies, to foster transboundary cooperation, reduce negative intersectoral impacts and strengthen beneficial synergies.
- Raise capacity on the development of equitable and sustainable transboundary arrangements on water allocation based on increased understanding and knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of water allocation in transboundary basins and aquifers, including mechanisms, tools and practices.
- Strengthen water governance and the application of integrated water resources management at the national and transboundary levels, in particular intersectoral cooperation, through National Policy Dialogues in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

3.1 Promoting integrated water resources management in transboundary basins

Lead Parties: Estonia and Slovenia.

Work to be undertaken

Up to four thematic sessions on different aspects of integrated water resources management will be organized on the margins of intergovernmental meetings of the Convention. These will focus, for example, on: public participation in transboundary basins; transboundary basin management plan development; forests, ecosystems, biodiversity and water; and water, transboundary cooperation and health. In addition, gender aspects of transboundary water cooperation could be the topic of a dedicated thematic session or integrated into the session on public participation in transboundary basins.

Up to two global workshops on different aspects of integrated water resources management will be organized in 2022 and 2023. Their focus might include the above-mentioned topics, conjunctive management of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters, and the source-to-sea approach linking governance and management of transboundary waters from the source (including mountain environment) to the sea (coastal and marine environment).

Resource requirements for activity 3.1: \$359,000.

3.2 Supporting intersectoral dialogues and assessments through the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach

Lead Party: Finland.

Work to be undertaken

The methodology for assessing the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins, i.e. intersectoral trade-offs, synergies and benefits, will be promoted, including by partners. Such partners are also encouraged to apply the methodology and their additional tools (for example, analytical tools and stakeholder methods). Focused material, such as a leaflet, will be prepared by the secretariat to support partners in applying the methodology. The methodology's application to assessments at the transboundary basin/aquifer level is subject to demand by the concerned countries and availability of devoted resources.

Support will be provided for the operationalization of nexus (intersectoral) solutions (in particular, facilitating identification of projects and of financing options) in up to four regions/basins, building on the publication "Solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus: Synthesis of experiences in transboundary basins" (forthcoming). Targeting of these activities is informed mainly by regional consultations, past assessments (most recently in the North-Western Sahara Aquifer System) and opportunities for partnership. In this respect, assistance will be provided in the development and operationalization of cross-sectoral regional strategies with a transboundary character as frameworks for action on nexus solutions and investments, building also on the value added of the nexus approach for sustainable development and bringing together climate change mitigation and adaptation. The regional strategies include follow-up to the Drin and the Drina nexus strategies/road maps and contributing to the regional water-energy-environment strategy in the framework of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. Nexus work in Central Asia will be supported by the project: Regional mechanisms for the low-carbon, climate-resilient transformation of the energy-water-land nexus in Central Asia, subject to confirmation of funding. Application of the general framework and questionnaire on nexus solutions and investments, developed for stocktaking and the above-mentioned publication, and its further refinement by users, will also be promoted.

The Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus, which will meet twice, will continue to function as a global platform for experience sharing on addressing intersectoral issues at the transboundary level, including the above-mentioned topics.

The toolkit publication for policymakers *Towards sustainable renewable energy investment and deployment: Trade-offs and opportunities with water resources and the environment*,¹⁷ developed in cooperation with the ECE Sustainable Energy Division, will be disseminated and promoted potentially supporting its application (depending on support from partners and

¹⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.II.E.17.

request from countries). Cooperation with other ECE divisions on sustainable natural resources management will continue.

Work in activity 3.2 is linked to activities 3.3 and 3.4 and programme area 5.

Resource requirements for activity 3.2: \$1,221,000.

3.3 Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context

Lead Parties: Finland and Hungary.

Work to be undertaken

A global session/webinar will be organized to promote the use of the “Handbook on water allocation in a transboundary context” (forthcoming) and build capacity on water allocation in a transboundary context.

In addition, broader capacity-building workshops or direct assistance will be conducted on a needs basis and tailored to learn about options to address and reconcile sectoral water demands through an integrated approach to transboundary water allocation. At least two regional workshops and at least one basin workshop will be organized. Activities will incorporate relevant guidance documents, tools and resources developed under the Convention, including on transboundary water allocation, the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach, the benefits of transboundary cooperation and adaptation to climate change, as appropriate.

A brief for policymakers will be elaborated based on the main messages in the “Handbook on water allocation in a transboundary context”. The brief will be translated into French, Russian and Spanish and printed.

Resource requirements for activity 3.3: \$401,500.

3.4 Supporting National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management under the European Union Water Initiative

Lead Parties/organizations: The secretariat, in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Commission and the European Union member States and their entities.

Work to be undertaken

Within the framework of the follow-up action to the European Union Water Initiative Plus programme (EUWI+) for the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) (project: European Union for Environment in Eastern Partnership countries - water resources and environmental data) and a regional project in Central Asia, the National Policy Dialogues will continue to advance the implementation of the water and health agenda and strengthen national and international water governance and cooperation. Work will focus on the improvement of the legal, regulatory, administrative, technical and economic frameworks of water management and transboundary water cooperation as well as promoting the implementation of water and health goals, including in conjunction with Covid-19 challenges. The activities will assist countries in reporting on and achieving the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, as well as setting and implementing targets and target dates, and monitoring and reporting on sustainable water management, safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. In countries with a European Union Association Agreement, or with other types of cooperation agreements with the European Union, the transposition and operationalization of the principles and approaches of the respective European Union water legislation will be supported. Links will be established with the European Union long-term policy objectives of the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020, the European Union Strategy on Central Asia and with the European Green Deal.

National steering committees that include stakeholders of key importance to integrated water resources management and transboundary water cooperation will continue to lead the country-specific dialogue processes. The outputs of the dialogues will include policy

packages, such as new legislative acts, ministerial orders, sectoral strategies and background studies, as well as pilot projects for further replication.

Exchange of experience between countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and with other regions of the world will be promoted through regional meetings and by using the regional and global Convention events. Such events will also serve as capacity development opportunities for water specialists from target countries.

Work under the National Policy Dialogues will be closely coordinated, will provide inputs to and will benefit from activities under programme area 3 and all the other programme areas. Specific links will be built with activity 3.2. In addition, it will contribute to country-level implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health and COVID-19 pandemic recovery, as well as the implementation of other relevant ECE conventions, with focus on the Industrial Accidents Convention and the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention). Continuation of work in this area beyond 2021 in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and beyond 2022 in Central Asia is subject to confirmation of funding and finalization of contractual arrangements.

Resource requirements for activity 3.4: \$2,642,000.

Possible partners: Academia (IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (Netherlands), Oregon State University (United States of America), the University of Oxford (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the University of Eastern Finland), the Austrian Development Agency, the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UBA, the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, the European Commission, the Finnish Environment Institute, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, GEF, GEF IW:LEARN, the European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation programme project implementing consortium, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), GWP, the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre, INBO, the International Office for Water of France, the Industrial Accidents Convention, IUCN, IWAC, the International Water Management Institute, OECD, the Protocol on Water and Health, regional seas commissions, river basin organizations (for example, the International Sava River Basin Commission, the Mekong River Commission, OKACOM, OMVS), the Scientific-Information Centre of the Inter-State Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia, the Union for the Mediterranean, UNDP, the United Nations regional commissions and WWF.

D. Programme area 4: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

Responsible bodies: The Task Force on Water and Climate and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.

Lead Parties: The Netherlands and Switzerland.

Rationale: Climate change impacts on water resources are already visible, for example through an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (floods and droughts), which can seriously affect water quantity, quality and ecosystems, and thereby impact water-dependent sectors. Many transboundary basins are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Transboundary water cooperation on climate change adaptation is not only useful in preventing the negative impacts of unilateral adaptation measures but can also make adaptation more effective and efficient. Since 2006, the Task Force on Water and Climate has been supporting countries sharing transboundary waters in adapting to climate change through the provision of guidance, capacity-building, projects on the ground and the exchange of experience.

Over the years, the support has progressed thematically from vulnerability assessments to more advanced stages of adaptation, such as facilitating funding of transboundary adaptation measures. In fact, raising funds for implementing climate change adaptation measures is a priority in many basins where adaptation strategies have been developed. The pandemic

recovery provides an additional opportunity in this regard. However, joint bodies struggle to find funds owing to a lack of capacity and the fact that most climate change funding is nationally oriented and not available for transboundary basins.

Work in this programme areas is guided by the Strategy for future work on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins under the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2015/4) and will be implemented in close coordination with activity 3.2 and programme area 5 and other programme areas.

Objectives:

- Increase adaptive capacity and improve cooperation on climate change adaptation and mitigation in transboundary basins.
- Increase funding for basin-wide or coordinated climate change adaptation measures in transboundary basins by facilitating access to climate funds and building related capacity.
- Increase awareness of the importance of water and transboundary cooperation in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction at the national and transboundary levels and in intergovernmental global processes, such as UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework.

Work to be undertaken

4.1 Supporting development of transboundary adaptation strategies and implementation of priority measures

The Convention will support up to three basin-level projects promoting transboundary cooperation in adaptation to climate change in basins such as, for example, the Chu-Talas, Dniester, Bug-Neman, Tisza and Sava Rivers, as well as potentially in other regions such as Africa, including development of vulnerability assessments, adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies, prioritization and implementation of mutually beneficial adaptation measures and integrating climate change adaptation into river basin management planning depending on the needs of the basin. These projects will build on the results of the past activities focused on transboundary climate change adaptation and integrated water resource management in the above-mentioned basins and exact activities will depend on the status and request of the basins.

Experience, good practices and lessons learned will be exchanged through the existing Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation, coordinated in cooperation with INBO, which will meet approximately twice. Two meetings of the Task Force on Water and Climate will be organized, as well as two global workshops on transboundary climate change adaptation and mitigation in 2022 and 2023 to facilitate exchange of experience, good practices and lessons learned. The above-mentioned events will support integration of climate change adaptation into national and transboundary water management policies and practices, and will focus, among other things, on disaster risk reduction and ecosystem-based adaptation.

The Convention will support mainstreaming of water and the benefits of transboundary cooperation into national climate-related documents through analysing how transboundary water cooperation is integrated into new and revised nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national adaptation plan (NAPs), discussing and developing joint approaches to addressing transboundary issues of water management in climate-related documents (such as NDCs, NAPs, national climate strategies and plans, etc.) in some basins and/or regions.

The importance of water and transboundary cooperation in adaptation will be promoted within global policy processes on climate and disasters, such as under UNFCCC, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the 2030 Agenda, through regular communication with climate change and disaster communities and by organizing joint sessions and/or events with partners to improve coherence between water, transboundary cooperation, climate change and disaster risk reduction at global events (for example, at UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties, global and regional platforms on disaster risk reduction, etc.).

The Convention, in cooperation with partners, will develop an online compendium of good practices on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins based on the recent developments within the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation and beyond, findings of the thematic workshops, inputs from partners and the publication *Water and Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins: Lessons Learned and Good Practices*.¹⁸

Resource requirements for activity 4.1: \$1,162,000.

4.2 Supporting transboundary basins in financing climate change adaptation

Up to two regional/basin sessions/webinars/training sessions will be organized on preparing bankable project proposals for climate change adaptation in transboundary basins, in partnership with multilateral development banks and climate funds, as well as in coordination with programme area 5.

Subject to the availability of dedicated resources, the Convention will contribute to the development of bankable projects proposals for one or two basins, most likely one of the basins under activity 4.1, in cooperation with partners as well as transboundary basin organizations and national relevant stakeholders.

Cooperation will be intensified with global climate funds, such as the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund, to increase the importance of water and transboundary cooperation for climate funding mechanisms

Resource requirements for activity 4.2: \$448,000.

Possible partners for programme area 4: the Adaptation Fund, AfDB, the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB), GEF IW:LEARN, GIZ, the Global Commission on Adaptation, the Green Climate Fund, GWP, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), INBO, IUCN, OSCE, the Stockholm Environment Institute, SIWI, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UNDP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNDRR, the World Bank, WMO, the World Water Council, WWF, Zoï Environment Network and joint bodies.

E. Programme area 5: Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development

Responsible body: The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.

Lead Parties: The Netherlands and Switzerland.

Rationale: The different stages of transboundary water cooperation and management require funding. Funding needs depend on the scope, mandate, objectives and ambition of the transboundary cooperation arrangement. However, the current lack of sustainable financing models often prevents countries and basin organizations from deepening their cooperation and implementing projects, affecting the long-term sustainability of their work. Many countries face financial capacity constraints, even more so due to the pandemic. Despite these challenges, mobilizing funding for transboundary water cooperation remains key, including in the context of the pandemic recovery and building back better.

The publication “Funding and financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development” (forthcoming) provides a comprehensive overview of challenges experienced by countries and basins and a typology of funding and financing sources. Approaches to funding and financing are multiple and while domestic budgetary resources from riparian States constitute the primary financial source for supporting joint bodies and transboundary water-related activities, basins should also, as much as possible, diversify and complement their financial options between public, private, domestic and international sources. There is

¹⁸ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.II.E.1.

potential for mobilizing private financing in transboundary basins, in particular through innovative financial mechanisms.

Raising awareness of sustainable financing models and exchanging good practices can help to identify and unlock funding sources, including new and emerging ones, analyse success factors, learn lessons and share good practices.

Objectives:

- Draw global attention to and raise awareness of the importance of financing transboundary water cooperation and of enhancing the financial sustainability of transboundary water management institutions and their implementation programmes and activities in the basin.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and peer learning (among national authorities, joint bodies and development and financial partners) on funding options to enhance the sustainability of transboundary water management.
- Support national authorities and joint bodies in shaping their strategies and plans for mobilizing financial resources for transboundary water cooperation processes from different sources, including national budgets.

Work to be undertaken

The Convention will further increase cooperation with financial institutions such as ADB, AfDB, EIB, GEF, IDB, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the World Bank and with other relevant organizations, such as the CEO Water Mandate, Disclosure Insight Action (Carbon Disclosure Project), OECD, Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) and WWF, to raise awareness of the importance of financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development. This will be achieved in particular by contributing, when relevant, to the above-mentioned financial institutions' events and other global events and by jointly developing a policy brief and communication materials, to discuss, share and highlight key challenges and opportunities for improvement and recommendations. Specific material will be developed and addressed to, but not limited to, ministries of finance.

Based on the findings of the publication "Funding and financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development" and on work achieved in other programme areas relevant to the financing work (i.e. activities 1.2, 3.2 and 4.2), support will be provided to up to three basins, upon request, in facilitating financing of transboundary water cooperation through tailored advice, dissemination of good practices, assistance to river basin organizations, provision of contacts and organization of round tables with financial partners when relevant.

Furthermore, based on basins' needs regarding financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development, and depending on future developments concerning the topic, the secretariat will organize one global workshop/event and organize/contribute to up to two regional workshops to reinforce capacities of countries on how to enhance resources mobilization for transboundary water cooperation and management activities and to share good practices, recent developments and lessons learned.

Resource requirements for programme area 5: \$472,000.

Possible partners: ADB, AfDB, CDP, Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), EIB, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, GEF, GEF IW:LEARN, the Geneva Water Hub, GWP, IDB, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, INBO, OECD, SWA, UNCDF, the World Bank, WWF, other multilateral development banks and financing institutions, bilateral development agencies and joint bodies.

F. Programme area 6: Reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention

Responsible body: The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

Lead organization: The secretariat in cooperation with UNESCO.

Rationale: In 2015, a regular reporting mechanism was introduced under the Convention, through decision VII/2 (ECE/MP.WAT/49/Add.2), to review and enhance implementation of the Convention and identify needs and gaps in transboundary cooperation. In 2017, the General Assembly adopted the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including indicator 6.5.2 (proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation) for which ECE and UNESCO are co-custodian agencies.¹⁹ In 2016, the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management decided, for Parties to the Convention, to combine the reporting under the Convention with reporting on indicator 6.5.2 in order to increase synergies between the two processes and avoid duplication of efforts (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2016/2, paras. 22, 24 and 26 (a)). The pilot reporting carried out in 2017–2018 allowed ECE and UNESCO, in collaboration with countries and partners, to improve and clarify the template, which was subsequently adopted for future reporting exercises at the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2018, through decision VIII/1 (ECE/MP.WAT/2018/5).

The first and the second reporting exercises under the Convention and on indicator 6.5.2, respectively held in 2017–2018 and 2020–2021, have shown the numerous benefits of reporting, such as improved national, basin, regional or global cooperation between water actors, enhanced political focus on cooperation, exchange of experiences and identification of gaps. They have also highlighted the many opportunities arising from using the results of reporting to enhance transboundary cooperation and support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5. However, they have also revealed challenges and difficulties encountered in reporting. During the next phase of reporting, and in order to fully capitalize on the value of reporting, it will be critical to enhance the quality, coverage and coordination of national reports, so that targeted action can be focused where it is most needed. Subsequently, it is important to move from reporting to action.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness of the importance of reporting under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and the derived benefits.
- Strengthen the capacity to report, enhance the quality and coverage of reports, and where possible, support countries in coordinating data at the basin level.
- Keep under review progress on transboundary water cooperation worldwide and in implementing the Convention and contribute to the follow-up and review of Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5 and indicator 6.5.2.
- Facilitate and disseminate gap analysis and evaluation of reports at all levels, from the national to the basin and global levels, in order to maximize the impact of reporting and secure country commitments, for example, road maps, that accelerate target achievement.
- Support acceleration of Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5 achievement.

Work to be undertaken

6.1 Supporting reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention

In 2023–2024, the third reporting exercise under the Convention and on indicator 6.5.2 will be carried out, in cooperation with UNESCO. This will include official communications with all countries sharing transboundary waters, data collection and data validation, development of a database, analysis of the national reports and preparation of global reports on indicator 6.5.2 and on the implementation of the Convention, including analyses for other areas of work of the Convention, as required. The results will be presented to the tenth session of the

¹⁹ See A/RES/71/313, annex.

Meeting of the Parties, and other events at the global level, such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2023 United Nations water conference.

For the third reporting exercise, an online reporting system and an online database under the Convention will be developed, taking into account other existing systems, such as the UN-Water Sustainable Development Goal 6 Data Portal, lessons learned from other MEAs (multilateral environmental agreements), and the need for coordination with indicator 6.5.2. The online system will facilitate the improved reliability of the data reported by countries, as well as the analysis of the reports by the secretariat. The reporting template may be adjusted to respond to the requirements of the online format. To support countries in reporting online, guidance material and activities will be prepared and existing guidance documents may be revised.

The capacity of countries to report will be strengthened with training sessions and exchange of experiences through the organization of global, regional and national activities and in the framework of other Convention activities. The secretariat will also cooperate with partners to fill gaps in reporting, or to improve coordination of reporting at the basin level.

Resource requirements for activity 6.1: \$567,000.

6.2 Promoting the use of the reports for enhancing transboundary water cooperation

The capacity of countries to make use of the reports and to move from reporting to addressing the gaps identified and accelerating the achievement of target 6.5 is highly contingent on the quality of the reports, and providing coherent data related to progress at the basin level. Such capacity will be strengthened through the organization of global, regional and national activities to share experiences on how to use the reports as a tool to foster transboundary cooperation, as well as to integrate and mainstream transboundary water cooperation reporting with existing national and regional efforts to support policymaking. Regular exchanges on the results of the reporting exercises will be fostered in the framework of the activities under the Convention at all levels.

The secretariat will also cooperate with partners, such as United Nations regional commissions or GWP and its Country Water Partnerships to promote the analysis of reports and to assist countries in designing road maps and committing to concrete actions capable of accelerating the achievement of target 6.5.2. These activities will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework and to the 2023 United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 (New York, 22–24 March 2023).

Resource requirements for activity 6.2: \$224,000.

Possible partners: UNESCO, the Statistical Commission, the United Nations regional commissions, UN-Water and the agencies of the Integrated Monitoring Initiative for Sustainable Development Goal 6, GWP, joint bodies and regional economic communities.

G. Programme area 7: Partnerships, communication and knowledge management

Responsible bodies: The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, national focal points, the Bureau and the secretariat.

Rationale: Partners are key for the Convention’s implementation. They play an increasingly important role with the globalization of the Convention. Communication, including through new channels, such as social media, and knowledge management are important cross-cutting activities for all the programme areas to improve understanding and implementation of the Convention and enhance the impacts of products and activities.

Objectives:

- To strengthen cooperation and synergies with different partners at the global and regional levels, including cooperation with other MEAs.

- To disseminate information on the Convention's activities and results through a broad range of communication tools.
- To strengthen delivery of programme outputs by advancing knowledge management.

Work to be undertaken

7.1 Cooperation with UN-Water, global and regional partners and other multilateral environmental agreements

Coordination and synergies will be sought with activities of other United Nations agencies and bodies. The Convention will contribute to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework. Cooperation under UN-Water will be strengthened, including through co-chairing of its Expert Group on Transboundary Waters and its Expert Group on Water and Climate.

Support will be provided to the preparatory process for the 2023 United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, to contribute to the inclusion of transboundary water cooperation issues, as well as by organizing a regional preparatory event in 2022.

Cooperation will be strengthened with relevant MEAs, such as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD, the Aarhus Convention, the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health, in particular by increasing communication with MEA secretariats.

Resource requirements for activity 7.1: \$176,000.

7.2 Activities of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

In 2022–2024, as in the past, the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) will be mainly serviced by the secretariat of the Industrial Accidents Convention in close cooperation with the secretariat of the Water Convention. It will implement the following activities:

- Promotion and translation of guidance developed by the Joint Expert Group and good industry practices.
- Development of a catalogue/web page for accidental water pollution events and good practices of countries and river basin commissions, including bilateral cooperation examples.
- Organization of a workshop on good practices for preventing accidental water pollution.

Resource requirements for activity 7.2: \$45,000.

7.3 Communication and knowledge management

Activities will include the production, publication and printing of information and communication materials (for example, leaflets, brochures and booklets in the relevant United Nations languages) on the Convention, media work, interviews and press releases, and the regular revision and update of the Convention website. Social media channels, i.e. Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, will continue to be used to build a support base and reach out to new constituencies. Regular information will be provided to stakeholders through the Convention's newsletter. Publications will be reprinted as needed.

As 2022 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Water Convention, this opportunity will be used to communicate about the achievements of the Convention in the past 30 years, also putting into perspective what it has to offer to countries and joint bodies. As appropriate, the secretariat will further develop and disseminate tailored materials on the Convention for diplomats and parliamentarians to raise awareness about the benefits of accession to the Convention.

Resource requirements for activity 7.3: \$167,000.

Possible partners: the Aarhus Convention, CBD, the Espoo Convention, the Ramsar Convention, UNCCD, UNFCCC and UN-Water.

IV. Overview of resource requirements

37. The estimated costs shown in the table below are limited to those intended to be covered by voluntary contributions, either through the Convention's trust funds or in kind. They include the costs associated with the organization of the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties. They do not include costs that are expected to be covered by the United Nations regular budget or other sources. The estimate is mostly based on the experience with previous programmes of work and may vary according to the further definition of the activities during implementation, as well as according to United Nations administrative regulations.

38. The secretariat will continue to produce the agendas, reports and other documents of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, the two working groups, the Legal Board and the Implementation Committee as official documents and to make them available in time for meetings in the three official languages of ECE, without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources. In addition to the documents mandated elsewhere in the programme of work by decisions of the Meeting of the Parties or linked to the mandate of the bodies under the Convention, the following documents are foreseen, with possible additional documents being identified by the working groups or the Bureau, as necessary:

- (a) Reports by the two task forces to the two working groups;
- (b) Documents related to the International Water Assessment Centre;
- (c) Documents related to the different programme areas.

39. Interpretation in the three official languages of ECE will be provided from regular budget resources for meetings of the two working groups, the Legal Board, the Implementation Committee, the Task Force on Water and Climate, the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation and the Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus, as well as for global and regional workshops organized in Geneva within the framework of the programme of work.

40. Where necessary, and subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, translation and interpretation may be provided into other languages of the United Nations for various activities.

Overview of resource requirements for 2022–2024

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>No.</i>	<i>Programme area or activity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Resource requirements</i>
	Meetings of the two working groups and the Bureau	Travel to meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (3 meetings), the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (2 meetings) and the Bureau (4 meetings)	398.0
		General Service (G) staff (8 months)	80.0
		Professional (P) staff (P-3 level) (8 months)	120.0
		P-5 staff (5 months)	110.0
		Printing, interpretation, etc.	30.0
	Tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties ^a	Travel of experts and staff, reporting service, additional interpretation costs, etc.	205.0
		P-3 staff (8 months)	120.0
		P-5 staff (2 months)	44.0
		G staff (4 months)	40.0
Subtotal (meetings of Convention bodies)			1 147.0
1	Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles		
1.1	Increasing capacity for implementation of the Convention and supporting national processes towards accession	National, subregional, basin-level and regional workshops, promotional events, training sessions (travel, consultancy, contractual services)	718.0
		Regional consultancy	140.0
		P-3 staff (39 months)	585.0
		P-5 staff (7 months)	154.0
		G staff (12 months)	120.0
		Communication material	15.0
1.2	Promoting and communicating the benefits of transboundary cooperation	Activities at basin and regional levels (travel, consultancy, contractual services)	51.0
		P-3 staff (6.5 months)	97.5
		G staff (1 month)	10.0
1.3	Supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies	Project-driven activities (resources to be provided by projects)	—
		Regional and basin-level workshops (travel, consultancy, contractual services)	190.0
		P-3 staff (8 months)	120.0
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (2 months)	20.0
1.4	Implementation Committee	Travel (3 or 4 meetings, 9 experts per meeting)	40.5
		Consultancy	20.0
		P-3 staff (9 months)	135.0
		G staff (1 month)	10.0
Subtotal programme area 1			2 448.0
2	Programme area 2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins		
		Training workshops and basin activities (travel, consultancy, contractual services)	172.0
		Consultancy	110.0

<i>No.</i>	<i>Programme area or activity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Resource requirements</i>
		P-2 staff (6 months)	72.0
		P-3 staff (9 months)	135.0
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (5 months)	50.0
Subtotal programme area 2			561.0
3	Programme area 3: Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water resources management at all levels		
3.1	Promoting integrated water resources management in transboundary basins	Travel (2 global workshops)	150.0
		Consultancy	40.0
		P-5 staff (2 months)	44.0
		P-3 staff (7 months)	105.0
		G staff (2 months)	20.0
3.2	Supporting intersectoral dialogues and assessments through the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach	Travel (basin assessments, regional/basin activities and Task Force meeting)	164.0
		Consultancies	190.0
		Contractual services	80.0
		Grants	100.0
		P-3 staff (39 months)	585.0
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (8 months)	80.0
3.3	Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context	Training workshops and basin activities (travels, logistics, consultancy)	152.0
		Policy brief	15.0
		P-3 staff (11.5 months)	172.5
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (4 months)	40.0
3.4	Supporting National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management under the European Union Water Initiative	Travel	260.0
		Grants	300.0
		Consultancies	520.0
		Contractual services	50.0
		P-3 staff (36 months)	540.0
		P-4 staff (36 months)	612.0
		G staff (36 months)	360.0
Subtotal programme area 3			4 623.5
4	Programme area 4: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins		
4.1	Supporting development of transboundary adaptation strategies and implementation of priority measures	Travel (global workshops, network meetings, Task Force meetings, advocacy events)	350.0
		Consultancy	200.0
		Grants	50.0
		Contractual services	50.0
		P-3 staff (26 months)	390.0

<i>No.</i>	<i>Programme area or activity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Resource requirements</i>
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (10 months)	100.0
4.2	Supporting transboundary basins in financing climate change adaptation	Travel (training sessions)	80.0
		Consultancy	76.0
		Grant	50.0
		Contractual services	10.0
		P-3 staff (12 months)	180.0
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (3 months)	30.0
Subtotal programme area 4			1 610.0
5	Programme area 5: Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development		
		Travel (global workshop, regional workshops, basin support)	120.0
		Consultancy	30.0
		P-3 staff (18 months)	270.0
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (3 months)	30.0
Subtotal programme area 5			472.0
6	Programme area 6: Reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention		
6.1	Supporting reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention	Travel	20.0
		Consultancy	50.0
		Contractual services	50.0
		P-3 staff (25 months)	375.0
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (5 months)	50.0
6.2	Promoting the use of the reports for enhancing transboundary water cooperation	P-3 staff (12 months)	180.0
		P-5 staff (2 months)	44.0
Subtotal programme area 6			791.0
7	Programme area 7: Partnerships, communication and knowledge management		
7.1	Cooperation with UN-Water, global and regional partners and other multilateral environmental agreements	Travel	20.0
		P-3 staff (6 months)	90.0
		P-5 staff (3 months)	66.0
7.2	Activities of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents	P-3 staff (3 months)	45.0
7.3	Communication and knowledge management	Travel	10.0
		Consultancy	20.0
		Contractual services	20.0
		P-3 staff (5 months)	75.0

<i>No.</i>	<i>Programme area or activity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Resource requirements</i>
		P-5 staff (1 month)	22.0
		G staff (2 months)	20.0
	Subtotal programme area 7		388.0
	Subtotal (programme areas 1–7 and meetings of Convention bodies)		12 040.5
	Overheads (7–13 per cent) (rounded)		1 373.3
	Total (rounded)		13 413.8

^a Some costs are expected to be covered by the host country.