

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the
Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses
and International Lakes
Expert Meeting on Monitoring, Assessment and Data Exchange
Geneva/hybrid, 13–14 April 2022

Outline for new publication “Good practices and lessons learned in
transboundary data exchange”

Draft

Summary and proposed action

At its ninth session (Geneva, 29 September – 1 October 2021) the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) entrusted the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment to collect good practices and lessons learned in transboundary data exchange and synthesize them in a publication, as part of the activities foreseen in the programme of work for 2022–2024 for *Programme area 2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins* (ECE/MP.WAT/63/Add.1, forthcoming).

The present document includes the draft outline of the new publication. It was prepared by the secretariat with input from lead Parties.

The Expert Meeting is invited to:

- (a) Discuss and provide input to the draft outline;
- (b) Discuss how to collect specific examples;
- (c) Discuss next steps to develop the publication.

The publication will be a collection of cases accompanied by text that highlights the lessons learned with reference to good practices as collected in the cases. The individual cases as such will not necessarily be an illustration of a specific chapter but in the text on the lessons, reference can be made to specific cases.

Content and experience will be drawn from a range of sources, as appropriate, including from reporting under the Water Convention and on SDG indicator 6.5.2, from projects or other work under the Water Convention and workshops and other meetings organized under the Convention’s programme of work for 2022-2024.

The purpose of the cases is to learn from real life examples, including both the difficulties and challenges that countries face and good solutions and ways of organization that countries and joint bodies have found useful. All countries and interested organisations are invited to submit their current practice on data exchange using a template attached herein.

Ongoing (non-complete or unfinished) examples can be submitted, not only success stories. It is possible that not all fields of the template are relevant or can be covered for each case. Such elements can be left blank.

The following chapters are envisaged. The template for the case descriptions basically includes the same elements.

1. Introduction

Background of the publication and how it was developed. The focus of the publication is on the data and information exchange. Nevertheless, monitoring aspects can be reflected since monitoring is a precondition for exchange of some data and choices made in monitoring can be decisive for data exchange.

2. Set-up of the data exchange

This chapter describes the lessons learned around the set-up of the data and information exchange; the responsible institution(s), the agreement or mandate that arranges for the data and information exchange as well as more technical documents that specify the (monitoring) data subject to exchange, and the financing mechanism.

3. Types of data and information exchanged

This chapter describes the lessons learned around the types of data and information that are exchanged as well as the role of international standards in the data-exchange. According to the Water Convention data and information exchange should include (art. 13):

- a) Environmental conditions of transboundary waters (this includes water quantity and quality data as well as ecosystem parameters);
- b) Experience gained in the application and operation of best available technology and results of research and development;
- c) Emission and monitoring data;
- d) Measures taken and planned to be taken to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact;
- e) Permits or regulations for waste-water discharges issued by the competent authority or appropriate body;
- f) National regulations.

Also, information about any critical situation that may have transboundary impact (art. 14) (warning and alarm) should be exchanged.

4. Harmonization and quality assurance

This chapter describes the lessons learned around how the harmonization of data is arranged (e.g., how the comparability of the data is secured (data dictionary)) as well as the quality assurance and quality control (e.g., data validation).

5. Data management, processing and exchange

This chapter describes the lessons learned around how the data are stored, analyzed and interpreted, including potentially harmonized assessment methods and modeling, and how the exchange of data is arranged.

6. Reporting and use of data

This chapter describes the lessons learned around how the reporting is done, including the purpose of the reporting, is there a joint report and how is the reporting organized, is the information used for different (international) reporting obligations, is the data publicly available, how data reach decision-makers, etc. Different types and levels of reporting will be addressed.

7. Impacts and benefits

The impacts or benefits from data and information exchange will be highlighted.

Case template

Name of basin(s) for which data exchange takes place/name of the case	
Riparian countries:	<i>What are the riparian countries through which the basin(s) flow?</i>
Responsible institution(s):	<i>What institution(s) is (are) responsible for the data exchange? This may be a joint body or the respective national institutes responsible for data collection.</i>
Mandate for data exchange:	<i>Is there an agreement between the riparian countries about the data exchange and what is in the mandate for the responsible institution(s)? This may also be an informal agreement.</i>
Financial arrangement:	<i>How is the data and information exchange financed?</i>
Types of data and information exchanged:	<p><i>What types of data and information are exchanged? Data exchange may refer to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) Environmental conditions of transboundary waters;</i> <i>b) Information on best available technology and results of research and development;</i> <i>c) Emission and monitoring data;</i> <i>d) Measures taken and planned;</i> <i>e) Permits or regulations for waste-water;</i> <i>f) National regulations;</i> <i>g) Critical situations.</i>
Harmonization and quality assurance:	<i>What measures are in place to ensure comparability and quality of the data (metadata, data dictionary, etc.)?</i>
Form of exchange:	<i>In what form is the data exchanged (e.g., paper/report, data file, online access, direct transmission, provision of information service, etc.)?</i>

Name of basin(s) for which data exchange takes place/name of the case	
Frequency of exchange:	<i>How often is the data exchanged (maybe different for different types of data)?</i>
Data storage:	<i>Is the data stored in a joint database or in national databases?</i>
Reporting and information utilization:	<i>Are there joint reports? What frequency? Are decision makers informed? If yes, how? Is the public informed/ is the information publicly available? If yes, how?</i>
Main difficulties and challenges:	<i>What are the main difficulties and challenges encountered in exchanging data and information?</i>
Impacts of data and information exchange:	<i>What are the impacts of exchange of data and information? (can be social, economic, environmental, policy level)</i>
Additional information:	<i>Any other information</i>