

Concept Note

IV Regional Roundtable on Transboundary Water Resources Management "Tools and Processes to Accelerate Progress on Transboundary Water Resources Management" May 31st & June 1st, 2022

Context

Central America is a region with an abundance of water resources; however, factors such as differences in the temporal and spatial distribution of the resource at the territorial level, the degradation of basins, the impacts of extreme hydrometeorological events associated with climate change, pollution, and weak governance, contribute to limitations in lack of access to water for multiple uses. Moreover, in the late time, more conflicts manifested associated with the scarcity or lack of this resource.

In addition, the region continues to be affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, showing the challenges that exist in terms of water supply and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), which has highlighted the need to improve how waters are managed and where the cooperation on waters shared by two or more states and their respective basins becomes critical¹.

In this context, strengthening cooperation of transboundary water resources management (TWRM) among the region countries constitutes a concrete opportunity to respond both: to the development goals and objectives set at a national level, as well as to meet internal social demands and generate economic opportunities for their population. However, in order to manage transboundary waters by adopting the basin as planning, management and governance unit, it is necessary to consider various factors that have to do with physical, social and economic aspects, as well as political considerations and aspects concerning the sovereignty of States², which requires promoting dialogue processes at the political level and others.

Background to the dialogue process

The Central American Integration System (SICA), particularly the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), has a significant role in designing regional strategies and policies that help to advance gradually in this area. In this regard, the CCAD has included in the Regional Environmental Framework Strategy (ERAM) 2021-2025 as one of its results to have constituted and in operation a regional framework of work for the management of international watercourses, basins and aquifers, which includes the elaboration of guidelines for cooperation in international waters, with the participation of priority political and institutional entities.

¹ The drainage areas of the basins are also included within this management, such as the Mesoamerican Reef Ecoregion, recognized as a shared transboundary zone.

² Including transboundary basins with Mexico.



In this respect, the dialogue process offers an opportunity to identify and execute actions that allow progress in implementing this framework as the first stage for cooperation. In 2019, the CCAD with support of GWP Central America, begins this process, which has developed itself continuously and has been joined by other partners such as the Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the Project "Integrated Management 'Ridge to Reef' Management of the Mesoamerican Reef Ecoregion" (MAR2R).

As part of the results obtained, participants considered it necessary to establish a Regional Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSRD) to create and sustain a Community of Practice for better TWRM, as well as to promote knowledge management to overcome existing information gaps regarding the situation of transboundary basins in Central America. Similarly, all country representatives agreed that the main objective in the MSRD process was the establishment of common and clear "principles" that could provide evidence to establish common goals, avoid conflicts and foster cooperation. They also agreed that there should be an institutionalization mechanism that has partners to provide technical support, with the ERAM of the CCAD being the one that was considered most appropriate. Finally, they expressed the importance and need to create a proposal for regional guidelines for managing transboundary waters; therefore, a discussion of the principles of international water law has begun, which in general have been considered appropriate for the context of the region.

Objectives

General

Contribute to the constitution of a regional framework for managing international watercourses, basins and transboundary aquifers in Central America within the Regional Environmental Strategy Framework (ERAM) and its strategic guideline on IWRM.

Specific

- Present a series of tools to facilitate transboundary water cooperation, including developing agreements and financing mechanisms.
- Review progress and generate inputs around the process of establishing a proposal for Regional Guidelines for Transboundary Water Resources Management.
- Promote the exchange of experiences among participants around the topic, considering an integrated and multisectoral approach.
- Identify the steps to follow within the Multi-Stakeholder Regional Dialogue (MSRD) framework.



Expected Results

- Socialization of the Guide³ for the development of agreements for transboundary water cooperation and the value of the United Nations water conventions to facilitate cooperation.
- Generation of inputs for the process of establishing the Regional Guidelines for TWRM.
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge among participants.
- Identification of the following steps within the Regional Multi-Stakeholder Regional Dialogue (MSRD).

Place and Date

The IV Regional Roundtable on Transboundary Water Resources Management will be held on May 31st and June 1st, 2022, in Panama City in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual via Zoom Platform).

Participants

The dialogue is aimed at officials from the Ministries of Environment, Foreign Affairs or related, bodies responsible for managing transboundary waters, institutions responsible for water management at the national level, universities, NGOs working in the territory. The participants of this workshop will come from the SICA countries, Mexico and Colombia. In addition, representatives from OAS, GEF, IDB, UNEP and other potential allies will also be invited.

Duration

The workshop is scheduled to take place in one and a half days through presentations, panels of experiences and group work.

³ "Practical Guide for the Development of Agreements or Other Arrangements for Transboundary Water Cooperation (UNECE, 2021)"

Proposed Agenda

Connection details for remote participants

Link: https://gwp-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcufu-oqTkqHdR-X1cL-B1mkRbbO_pk2LJ5

Passcode: 669174

Meeting ID: 833 9607 2070

FIRST DAY

Hour	Activity	Responsible
08:30-09:00	Registration	CCAD GWP
09:00 - 09:30	Opening Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GWP Centro America - Secretariat of the Water Convention (UNECE) - CCAD - Government of Panama 	CCAD
09:30 - 09:45	Presentation of the participants	GWP CAM
09:45 - 10:00	Presentation Update on the progress in the implementation of the ERAM	CCAD
10:00 - 10:20	Presentation Background of the Multi-Stakeholder Regional Dialogue process Proposal for Regional Guidelines for Transboundary Water Cooperation	GWP CAM
10:20 - 10:50	Plenary Countries comments on the proposed guidelines and background	
10:50 - 11:05	Break	
11:05 - 11:40	Panel I Cooperating for the better management of transboundary waters in Central America Role and activities of several Secretariats under SICA Q&As	CRRH CAC CEPREDENAC OSPRESCA
11:40 - 12:40	Presentations and discussion The role of the global UN conventions for transboundary waters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The New York Convention: background in Central America - The Water Convention: Update (activities and new tools and guidance) - Benefits of the Water Convention: Experience of its implementation by Slovenia - Progress in the Region: opportunities of acceding to the Convention by the Dominican Republic Reflection in plenary: Opportunities for the region	Water Convention Secretariat (UNECE) Slovenia Dominican Republic
12:40 - 1:40	Lunch	



1:40 - 2:10	Presentations Global processes promoting cooperation in the region - Outcomes of the monitoring of SDG indicator 6.5.2 and acceleration of progress - UN Water Conference 2023 and regional consultation Q&As	UNECE ECLAC
2:10 - 3:10	Panel II Experiences and projects of cooperation for the management of transboundary waters in the region Sharing of regional experiences of transboundary water cooperation Q&As	Mexico and Belize Ocoatepeque-Citalá aquifer Sixaola-La Amistad
3:10 - 3:25	Break	
3:25 - 3:40	Presentation Practical Guide for the Development of Agreements or Other Arrangements for Transboundary Water Cooperation	Water Convention Secretariat (UNECE)
3:40 - 5:00	Groups work Application of the Guide and opportunities to strengthen cooperation in the region within the Framework of Regional Guidelines Plenary	GWP/ Water Convention Secretariat
Closing of the Day		

SECOND DAY

Hour	Activity	Responsible
9:00 - 9:15	Presentation Funding and financing for transboundary water cooperation and basin development	Water Convention Secretariat
9:15 - 9:30	Presentation Climate Financing Mechanisms	GWP
9:30 - 9:40	Q&A	
9:40 - 10:40	Panel III Financing for transboundary water cooperation Q&As	IDB World Bank OAS
10:40 - 11:10	Groups works Applicable mechanisms to finance cooperation and interventions in transboundary basins	GWP/ Water Convention Secretariat
11:10 - 11:25	Break	
11:25 - 11:45	Plenary Sharing outcomes of the groups work	All
11:45 - 12:00	Presentation Proposal for a Community of Practice	GWP
12:00 - 12:45	Interactive Work Next steps to undertake to improve cooperation for the management of international waters within the framework of the ERAM.	GWP/Water Convention secretariat/CCAD
12:45 - 1:00	Conclusions and closing of the event	CCAD/Panama
1:00 - 2:00	Lunch	