



Convention of the Protection and Use of
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus
Eighth meeting
Geneva, Switzerland, 7-8 December 2023

ANNOTATED AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTH MEETING

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Room III with a possibility of remote participation,
starting on Thursday, 7 December at 10.00 a.m. ending on Friday, 8 December at 16:30 p.m.

I. AGENDA

- Item 1: Opening and adoption of the agenda
- Item 2: Taking stock of 10 years of nexus work under the Water Convention
- Item 3: Financing and cross-sectoral cooperation: multi-benefit and multi-source investments
- Item 4: Discussing the key role of transboundary water resources for the clean energy transition
- Item 5: Mainstreaming nexus in global climate and environmental processes of cooperation
- Item 6: Water allocation in a transboundary context
- Item 7: Discussion on the future of the Task Force
- Item 8: Next steps
- Item 9: Other business
- Item 10: Closing

II. BACKGROUND

A huge potential to generate benefits across water, food, energy, and ecosystems lies in transboundary river basins and aquifers around the world. As these basins generate 60% of global freshwater and are home to 40% of the world's population, they represent ecosystems of global importance and play a key role in global food and energy production, and socio-economic development more broadly. To be sustainable, and resilient to the increasing challenges brought by climate change, the exploitation of all these different benefits requires mutual understanding and strong cooperation, both across sectors and borders.

The Water Convention promotes cross-sectoral cooperation in transboundary basins more explicitly since 2013, when the Meeting of the Parties decided to include the theme of water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in the Convention's Programme of Work. Since then, a Transboundary Nexus Assessment Methodology (TBNA) was developed to assess cross-sectoral issues and elaborate possible cooperative solutions, and it was implemented in six transboundary river basins and one shared aquifer. This work was carried out with the guidance of the Task Force on the Water-Food-

Energy-Ecosystems Nexus, a global platform open to Parties and non-Parties that involved over time hundreds of country and civil society representatives, experts, and practitioners.

In time, the Task Force allowed the transboundary water community in countries and basins to strengthen their cooperation with the energy sector, and in particular to explore the benefits and impact of sustainable renewable energy expansion. Continuing this cooperation would allow for sustainable energy and water solutions to be widely implemented and upscaled. In fact, strengthening cooperation between water management and the energy sector remains a priority for advancing the Agenda 2030, notably in transboundary contexts where lack of cooperation can cause frictions across countries.

Responding to the need of the countries to discuss how trade-offs and synergies can be addressed concretely, the Water Convention supported in 2020-2021 a global stocktaking of “nexus solutions and investments”, and in the Programme of Work (2022-2024) focused the nexus work area on the “operationalization” of nexus solutions and investments.

The lack of financing emerged as a key obstacle to the implementation of nexus solutions, and at the same time cross-sectoral cooperation was recognized as one of the most promising factors to accelerate the mobilization of financing on the one hand, and to make investments more beneficial for multiple actors, benefitting also water management and cooperation.

Overall, cooperation on water, energy, and food is emerging as a key ingredient in many processes that aim at strengthening natural resource management, climate action, and environmental protection locally and globally. For instance, the GEF International Waters program’s methodology to analyse transboundary issues and structure action plans is being revised to improve nexus outreach. As providers of 60% of freshwater resources globally, transboundary ecosystems should not be neglected when mainstreaming nexus cooperation in these processes, and the experience accumulated under the Task Force can be valuable to understand “how” to effectively do it.

The key role of water for the energy transition (hydropower, nuclear, and all renewable energies directly or indirectly through e.g the mining processes behind the extraction of lithium for the production of batteries) is becoming clearer, and an urgent topic to discuss in the context of climate change, because of the striking vulnerability of the energy system to water stress, and weather extreme events, and, at the same time, to minimize impacts on shared waters from the transition. In fact, more should be done to quantify the details of this inter-dependency, to develop solutions that can actually “water-proof” the climate transition, and to clarify the role of water institutions and transboundary cooperation frameworks as agents of change.

In addition to the nexus solutions, specific cross-sectoral issues may also be addressed through water allocation in transboundary contexts. Implementation of water allocation arrangements implies some sort of water infrastructure: reservoirs for storage, diversions, etc. Hydropower and the agriculture sector, among other water users, depend on water allocation, and allocation arrangements can contribute to reconcile water storage related needs, including climate adaptation, flood and drought risk management and integration of renewable energies.

The 8th meeting of the Nexus Task Force will focus on:

1. Taking stock of the 10 years of work on water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus under the Water Convention;
2. Financing cross-sectoral solutions: multi-benefit and multi-source investments;
3. Mainstreaming nexus in global climate and environmental processes of cooperation;
4. Discussing the potential of transboundary water cooperation for the energy transition;

5. Summary Handbook on Water allocation in transboundary contexts including new examples;
6. Discussing the future of the Task Force.

III. ANNOTATIONS TO THE AGENDA

Session 1. Thursday 7 December – 10:00-12:00 CET

Item 1: Opening and adoption of the agenda (10.00 - 10.10)

1. The meeting will be opened by high level representatives.
2. The Chair will invite the Task Force to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document.

Item 2: Taking stock of 10 years of nexus work under the Water Convention (10.10 - 10.30)

3. The Chair of the WFEE Nexus Task Force under the Water Convention and the Secretariat will present key highlights from the work carried out under the guidance of the Task Force in the 10 years since its establishment, reflecting on the achievements made and the emerging topics that could be considered in new Programme of Work.

Item 3: Financing and cross-sectoral cooperation: multi-benefit and multi-source investments (10.30– 12.00)

4. The Chair will invite partners to reflect on the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation from the perspective of financing, drawing from the findings from the stocktaking of nexus solutions and investments of 2020-2021 and the Global Workshop on Funding and Financing Transboundary Cooperation.
5. Possible aspects in focus in this session will be investments in solutions that produce multiple benefits, investments that catalyse various sources of financing across water, agriculture, and energy, the use of integrated analysis and modelling to inform investment decisions.

Background documents:

- [Solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus: A synthesis of experiences in transboundary basins | UNECE](#)
- [Funding and Financing of Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development | UNECE](#)
- [How to Accelerate the Funding and Financing of Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development? Opportunities and Challenges | UNECE \(Brochure\)](#)
- Ms Dimka Stantchev Skeie, Project Manager, Section Water Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency. *Key messages from the Global Workshop on Funding and Financing Transboundary Cooperation*
- Mr Thierno Diallo, Senior Investment Officer, Blue Peace Financing Initiative, United Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). *Cross-sectoral aspects of the Blue Finance Initiative*
- Ms Liseth Hernández, Executive Secretary of Plan Trifinio, *Cross-sectoral aspects in the Trifinio Water Fund*
- Mr Kazuhiro Yoshida, Senior Water Resources Specialist, Asian Development Bank. *Water -Energy Nexus modelling to inform investments in the CAREC Water Pillar in Central Asia*

- Ms Monica A. Altamirano, Specialist in PPPs and Systems Thinker, NetworkNaturePlus Consortium Partner. *Multi-sectoral infrastructure investment planning for a regenerative economy: balancing cooperation and prioritization*

Session 2. Thursday 7 December – 14:30-16:30 CET

Item 4: Discussing the key role of transboundary water resources for the clean energy transition (14.30 - 16.30)

6. Transboundary water resources are critical for energy production, serving energy infrastructure such as hydropower, thermal and nuclear power plants, and the energy transition is expected to require more water for new technologies and uses. On the one hand, this makes the energy system highly vulnerable to water stress, and highly exposed to the impact of extreme weather events and climate change; on the other, it exposes transboundary water resources to higher demands for water.
7. Participants will explore the role of transboundary water resources, ecosystems, and institutions in the clean energy transition and climate mitigation. How can transboundary cooperation facilitate the sustainable use of water for these uses, and at the same time improve resilience of energy systems?

Panel I: Water resources for the clean energy transition

- Mr Hamid Bastani, Project Officer for the Energy Sector, World Meteorological Organization (WMO). *The increased vulnerability of the energy sector in a changing climate*
- Mr Martin Niemetz, Sustainable Development Expert on Energy, UNDESA. *Water in the energy transition: new trends and increasing demands*
- Ms Kavita Rai, Senior Programme Officer, Energy Access, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). *The Lives and Livelihood initiative*
- Ms Biljana Rajic, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Lessons learned from the Western Balkans: Nexus activities in Drina River Basin and the Sarajevo Climate and Energy Week*
- Mr Juan Cruz Monticelli, Head of the Energy Section, Organization of American States. *Water cooperation to enable the clean energy transition in LAC*

Guiding questions for the Panel I:

- *Looking at the future energy system, what should be 3 priority areas for “waterproofing” energy systems?*
- *Giving that transboundary water accounts for 60% of global fresh water (river basins and aquifers), how crucial do you think cooperation be for energy resilience? Cooperation on what?*
- *What are you/ is your institution doing to address these issues?*

Panel II: The role of Hydropower

- Ms Maria Gwynn, Senior Fellow, Institute for Public International Law, Bonn, former Governing Council of ITAIPU Binacional. *Ensuring energy and water security in times of droughts (the experience of ITAIPU)*
- Mr Alistair Rieu-Clarke, Professor at University of Northumbria. *International Law Applicable to Hydropower*
- Mr Sokhem Pech, Independent Expert on Dams. *Lessons learned from the Mekong*
- Ms Dinara Ziganshina, Director, Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia (SIC-ICWC). *Lessons learned from Central Asia*

Guiding questions for Panel II:

- *What are the most urgent challenges you see in the exploitation of transboundary hydropower resources (at least in your region)?*
- *What is the role of hydropower operators in the governance of transboundary waters? How do you see this role evolving in relation to other uses of water and environmental needs?*
- *And what is the role of international environmental law in the development, and operation, of sustainable hydropower facilities?*

Session 3 – Friday 8 December 10:00-12:00 CET

Item 5: Mainstreaming nexus in global climate and environmental processes of cooperation (10:00 – 11:00)

8. Participants will be informed on the efforts of partner organizations in the mainstreaming of nexus approach in different global processes, such as United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Convention of Biodiversity, Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES).

Panel discussion moderated by Konstantina Toli, GEF IW-LEARN Project Coordinator, IOC/UNESCO.

- Mr Dimitris Faloutsos, Deputy Coordinator, Global Water Partnership Transboundary Water Cooperation (GWP)
- Ms Karen Denis, Legal Assistant, Regional Center for the Management of Groundwater in Latin America and the Caribbean (CeReGAS) and Advisor to the Ministry of Environment, Uruguay
- Mr Martin Prowse, Green Climate Fund
- Ms Julia Weatherhogg, United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Ms Paula Harrison, Professor in Land and Water Modelling, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Co-Chair of IPBES Nexus Assessment (Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services)
- Ms Dagmar Behrendt Kaljarikova, European Commission, DG Environment
- Ms Cecilia Vey, Advisor on Water Policy, German Development Cooperation (GIZ)

Item 6: Water allocation in a transboundary context (11.00 - 12.00)

Background document: [Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context | UNECE](#)

9. The Task Force will discuss activities related to water allocation in transboundary contexts.
10. The Summary Handbook on Water Allocation in Transboundary Contexts will be showcased which features updated examples of Decision-Support Systems (DSS) and basin modelling for comprehensive transboundary water allocation planning and development of agreements, especially in water scarce regions.
11. Further regional and global events, including the regional workshop planned for Southern Africa in 2024, will be discussed further.

Session 4 – Friday 8 December 14:30-16:30 CET**Item 7: Discussion on the future of the Task Force (14.30 – 15.30)**

12. After an introduction to the session by the Secretariat, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the future of the Task Force in the new Programme of Work 2025-2027. To do so, they will be divided into thematic groups and report to plenary.

Item 8: Next steps (15.30 – 15.45)

13. The Secretariat will present the remaining activities in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus to be undertaken as part of the Water Convention's Programme of Work 2022-2024, and next steps in the decision regarding the new Programme of Work 2025-2027.

Item 9: Other business (15.45 – 15.55)

14. At the time of writing, the secretariat had no points to propose under this item. Delegates wishing to propose points under this item should inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

Item 10: Closing (15.45 – 16.30)

15. The Chair will close the meeting at 16:30 CET on 8 December 2023.
