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Item 19 of the provisional agenda

**Programme of work for 2025–2027, terms of reference
of the bodies established to implement it and
resources needed for its implementation**

Draft programme of work for 2025–2027

Prepared by the Bureau with the support of the secretariat

Summary

The present document sets out the proposed activities under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) for the period 2025–2027, 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 Water Convention, with the support of the secretariat. It was discussed at the fifth joint meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva, 6–8 May 2024), which entrusted their Co-Chairs, in cooperation with the Bureau, and with support of the secretariat, 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 tenth session.^a

The draft programme of work was developed in a consultative manner, considering suggestions put 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 2025–2027.

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 to indicate at the tenth 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 States and other stakeholders (e.g., non-governmental and international organizations) to indicate at the tenth 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 the:

(i) Priority and strategic importance of the proposed activities;

(ii) Availability of leadership;

(iii) Availability of resources;

(f) Adopt the programme of work and its budget as amended at the tenth session, and to entrust the Bureau and the secretariat with the task of estimating costs for those activities that require 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. 20 (f), under tab entitled “Outcomes”, available at https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/5thjointWGIWRM-WGMA_2024, and ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2024/2-ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2024/2 (forthcoming).

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

A. Background

1. Water is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and its sustainable management is one of the most pressing challenges facing humankind. However, the world is seriously off-track to meet Sustainable Development Goal 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all).
2. Transboundary waters account for 60 per cent of the world's freshwater flows. Transboundary river and lake basins cover nearly half of the Earth's land surface and over 600 aquifers are shared.
3. Cooperation on transboundary surface waters and groundwaters is therefore vital in preventing conflicts, promoting sustainable development, increasing climate change resilience and driving regional integration, as recognized by the inclusion of transboundary water cooperation in Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5.
4. However, transboundary waters are frequently used unsustainably and increasing pressures from population growth, agriculture and energy production, ecosystem degradation and climate change are expected to worsen the situation.
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 inadequate in terms of tackling the above-mentioned challenges. So far, only 26 out of the 153 States Members of the United Nations sharing transboundary waters have achieved a 100 per cent value for indicator 6.5.2, a much lower rate than for most other Sustainable Development Goal 6 indicators. Progress therefore needs to be urgently accelerated to ensure that all transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers are covered by operational arrangements, as also called for by the Secretary-General's Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework.¹
6. The 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) recognized² that advancing water cooperation is crucial but requires increasing capacity, investing in science, data and knowledge exchange and mobilizing financial resources.
7. The Water Convention provides a unique global, legal and intergovernmental framework for promoting transboundary water cooperation, sustainable management of shared water resources, stability and peace.
8. For over 30 years, the Convention has fostered the development of agreements, establishment of joint institutions and strengthening of cooperation at both the political and technical levels. It has also strengthened national water governance and regional integration. It has led to the implementation of cooperative solutions generating multiple economic, social, environmental and political benefits.
9. Since 2016, the Convention, for which the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) provides the secretariat, has become a global instrument open to accession by all States Members of the United Nations. Countries from different regions of the world have joined it. This programme of work is the third to serve a global Convention.

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

² A/CONF.230/2022/14.

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 operationalizing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, particularly 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 progress on transboundary water cooperation, discussing common challenges and defining responses. Reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 (co-custodian agencies: ECE, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) is linked to 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: all the other targets of Goal 6, Goal 2 (zero hunger), Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy), Goal 14 (sustainable use of oceans) and Goal 15 (life on land) through, for instance, work on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, the source-to-sea approach and combating desertification, land degradation and drought; 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 Goals 5 (gender equality), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). The Convention can therefore help to address the triple planetary crisis.

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

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

(b) The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework³ and the United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation and its upcoming collaborative implementation plan;⁴

(c) 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

(d) The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),⁸ the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 2018–2030 Strategic Framework⁹ and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030;¹⁰

(e) Regional commitments on water, such as the outcomes of the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conferences,¹¹ the Council of the European Union conclusions on European Union water diplomacy,¹² the African Water Vision 2025,¹³ the Regional Water

³ The programme of work mainly supports the accelerators on governance, data and information, finance and capacity-building.

⁴ Available at www.unwater.org/publications/united-nations-system-wide-strategy-water-and-sanitation.

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

⁶ A/RES/69/313, annex.

⁷ A/RES/69/283, annex II.

⁸ CBD/COP/DEC/15/4.

⁹ See www.unccd.int/resources/other/unccd-2018-2030-strategic-framework.

¹⁰ See www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/index.html.

¹¹ See www.unece.org/env/efe/welcome.html.

¹² See www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/138253.pdf.

¹³ 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).

Action Agenda 2023 for Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁴ and the Arab Strategy for Water Security in the Arab Region (2010–2030) and its update from 2022.¹⁵

C. Objective and structure of the programme of work

14. The programme of work aims to support implementation of the Water Convention and its principles, 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 Lakes¹⁶ and the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level,¹⁷ adopted by the Meeting of the Parties respectively at its sixth (Rome, 28–30 November 2012) and eighth (Astana, 10–12 October 2018) sessions.

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

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

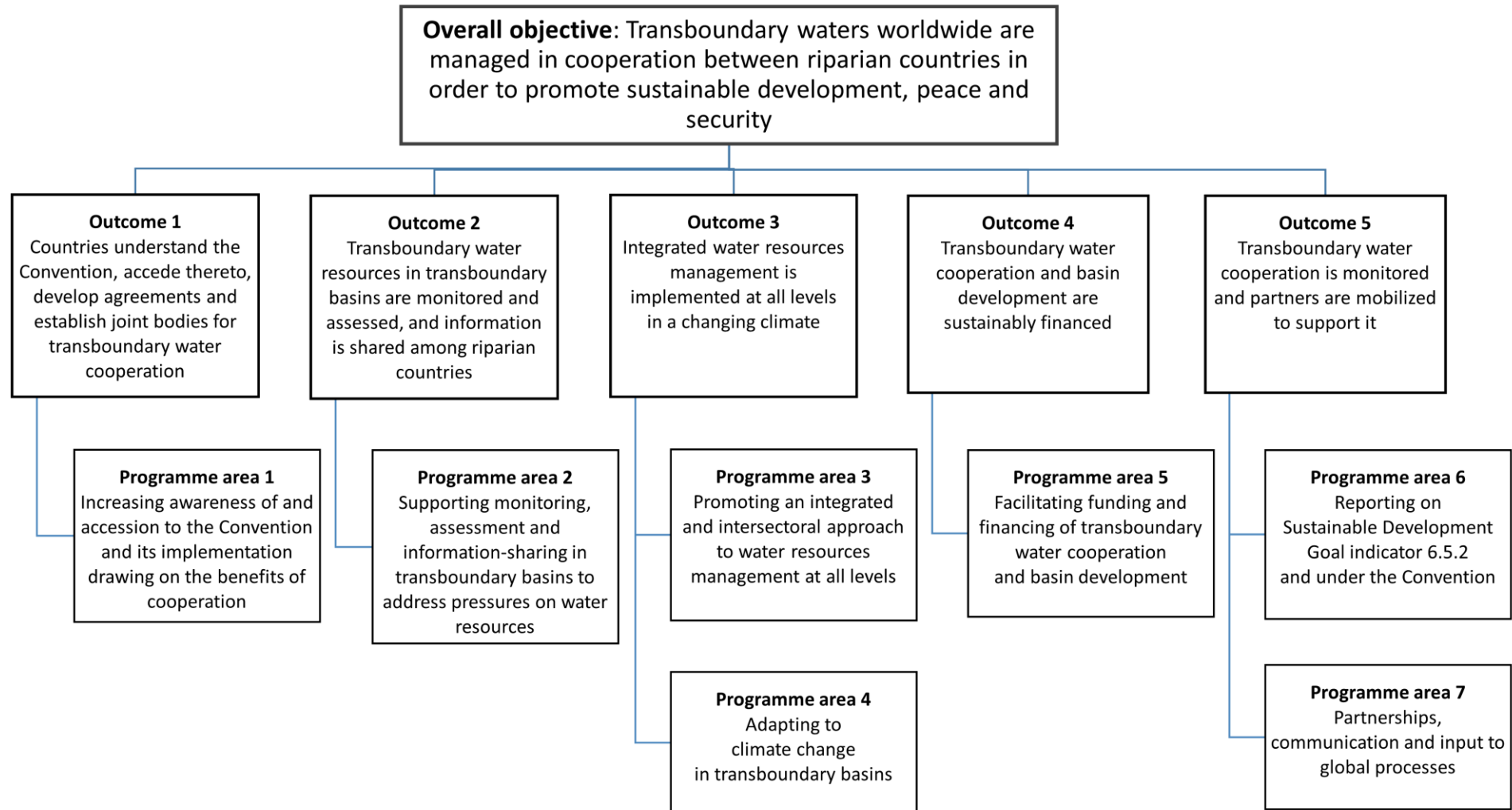
¹⁴ See www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/regional_water_action_agenda_lac.pdf.

¹⁵ See www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/arab_strategy_for_water_security-english_translation-2012_0.pdf and <https://acsad.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A.pdf> (Arabic only).

¹⁶ ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2, pp. 15–22.

¹⁷ ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2, pp. 13–28.

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 of 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. Synergies between different programme areas will be strengthened. Linkages are mentioned in the different programme areas, and events may be organized with sessions focused on different programme areas, depending on demand and regional priorities.

18. The types of activities include a combination of guidance development, exchange of experience and capacity-building, political advocacy, monitoring and assessments, and projects on the ground, with the aim of fostering progress at the policy and technical levels, from the national and basin levels to the global level.

19. Certain topics will be mainstreamed into the entire programme of work. For example, gender mainstreaming is important to ensure that water policies and decisions benefit both men and women and do not increase inequality. Thus, women's participation in Convention bodies, capacity-building events, pilot projects and other activities will be promoted and gender considerations will be taken into account in activities and publications.

II. Bodies to implement the programme of work for 2025–2027

A. Bureau

20. In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the Meetings of the Parties,¹⁸ 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.

21. The main responsibilities of the Bureau include: (a) making arrangements to further develop the workplan, adapting it to changing circumstances 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 the Convention's implementation; 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 Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and to the Protocol on Water and Health, if applicable, in developing response measures and promoting 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 programme of work's implementation. 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.

¹⁸ ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2.

25. The Working Groups take initiatives to strengthen the Convention's application, including preparing 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 programme of work's implementation.

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 (to be co-chaired by Hungary and another Party) is on intersectoral activities to support the Convention's implementation 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; promote source-to-sea governance and 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, linkages with drought and integrated drought management issues and the reconciliation of multiple water uses in transboundary basins; and facilitate the financing of transboundary water cooperation and reporting under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2. The Working Group also seeks to: build and strengthen the institutions responsible for managing transboundary waters; facilitate the work of joint bodies; and promote public participation in decision-making.

28. The Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (to be co-chaired by Finland and Senegal) aims to assist countries in establishing and implementing joint programmes for monitoring and assessing the pressures on and the conditions of transboundary waters, including droughts, 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 Convention's implementation. The Working Group also seeks to: promote exchange of data on transboundary waters; facilitate reporting under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2; support exchange of experience on water allocation in a transboundary context; support exchange of experience on conjunctive water management; and support work on water quality and pollution prevention and control.

Resource requirements¹⁹ for meetings of the Bureau and the two Working Groups as well as the Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Financing: \$1,033,000.

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 implementation and application of and compliance with the Convention. It carries out the functions assigned to it in decision VI/1 and 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 work under the Convention, upon request by other Convention bodies. In the triennium 2025–2027, no activity is under the Legal Board's direct responsibility; thus, it will only meet if the need arises.

¹⁹ 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 and exclude both costs expected to be covered by the United Nations regular budget or other sources and overhead costs.

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 (lead Parties: Netherlands and another Party) 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 Network's basins.

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

33. The Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus (lead Party: Finland) 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) (current host: Kazakhstan) is the Convention's collaborative centre. In accordance with its terms of reference (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2017/4), the Centre's overall objective is to support the 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, co-led by Hungary and Serbia) 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).

I. Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Financing

37. In the triennium 2025–2027, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Financing will develop, through an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process, a proposal for a more sustainable and predictable financing mechanism of the Water Convention's work, for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its eleventh session, as defined in decision X/[tdb] on a process towards a more sustainable and predictable financing mechanism of the Water Convention's work.

III. Areas of work and activities

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

Responsible bodies: Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, national focal points, Bureau, Implementation Committee, secretariat.

Rationale: In recent years, numerous countries have started national processes of accession to the Convention and requested guidance. However, in many other countries, the Convention

is still not sufficiently well-known at the technical and political levels. Accession of new countries needs to be scaled up. At the same time, many new Parties seek support in implementing the Convention to enhance transboundary water cooperation. This requires strengthening capacities to accede to and implement the Convention and supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies. Work in this area is guided by the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2).

1.1 Increasing awareness of and supporting national processes towards accession to the Convention

Lead Parties: Finland, France, Ghana and Hungary.

Objectives:

- Increase awareness of and political support for the Convention and for transboundary water cooperation;
- Increase accession to the Convention and, as appropriate, to the Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, promoting synergies between the two conventions.

Proposed activities

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 global and regional meetings (e.g., United Nations Water Conference, World Water Forum, World Water Week, Africa Water Week, Arab Water Week, Asia-Pacific Water Forum).

Up to two training sessions for practitioners on the United Nations 1992 and 1997 Water Conventions and international water law 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. One training session will target especially key actors and experts from Spanish-speaking countries. Partners will be provided with relevant inputs for their promotional activities.

Focal points, the Bureau and the secretariat will also contribute to international water law training sessions organized by partners. Additionally, access to online training sessions, videos and materials on transboundary water cooperation and international water law will be facilitated by making available existing online materials and tools on the Convention's website, with links to partners' platforms.

The publication *Frequently Asked Questions on the 1992 Water Convention, with the Road Map to Facilitate Accession Processes* (ECE/MP.WAT/59) will be updated.

Upon request, support will be provided to countries to accede to the Convention. Such support will include the provision of legal and technical advice to understand the Convention's provisions. National tailor-made workshops will be organized to build capacity on the Convention, and to discuss the benefits of accession and the following steps.

Up to five regional, subregional or 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.

Where appropriate, the Water Convention will be promoted together with the Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

Resource requirements: \$2,122,700.

1.2 Increasing capacity for implementation of the Convention at the national and regional levels, especially for new Parties

Lead Parties: Finland, Ghana.

Objective: Increase capacity for the implementation of the Convention principles at the national and regional levels, including by strengthening synergies with activities of other regional and global partners, and with the support of the Implementation Committee, where relevant.

Proposed activities

Support will be provided to up to five new Parties to develop national implementation plans for the Convention. Such support will include the organization of national tailor-made workshops to build capacity on the Convention's implementation, identify strategic areas to enhance water governance and interventions at the national, basin and regional levels, and discuss possible financing options with technical and financial partners.

Peer-to-peer exchanges will be fostered through the Twinning Initiative under the Convention, aiming to link countries close to accession and/or new Parties with established Parties to enable the transfer of practical experience and lessons learned on accession to and implementation of the Convention, development of implementation plan or their targets and/or agreed joint activities for stronger water cooperation.

Support will be provided to prompt basin and regional dynamics towards application of the Convention's principles, in cooperation with and by strengthening synergies with activities of regional and global partners (intergovernmental and other organizations, basin organizations, transboundary commissions, regional commissions and other United Nations agencies, United Nations country teams, regional economic communities, academia).

Resource requirements: \$797,500.

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

Lead Parties: Germany, Hungary.

Objective: Strengthen transboundary water cooperation by developing agreements and establishment of joint bodies by:

- Building trust and facilitating transboundary dialogues, thereby supporting conflict prevention and promoting peace;
- Supporting countries in developing or revising agreements or arrangements in transboundary basins on the basis of the Convention and its tools.

Proposed activities:

The *Practical Guide for the Development of Agreements or Other Arrangement for Transboundary Water Cooperation*²⁰ will be further developed into an online toolkit, with, among other things, good practices collected and links to agreements.

A global workshop on developing and implementing legal frameworks agreements will be organized to support cooperation processes, promoting tools and best practices developed under the Convention for more effective and sustainable implementation of agreements and other arrangements for transboundary water cooperation.

Tailored assistance and support will be provided to countries and basins for the development of transboundary water cooperation agreements and strengthening of institutions, based on the *Practical Guide*, building on the benefits of transboundary cooperation and with due account taken of gender mainstreaming. Such support will be provided to the Drin River basin and the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer basin. Such support will include legal and technical advice on negotiating agreements that incorporate conjunctive water management, where relevant, and can involve support of the Implementation Committee, where requested.

²⁰ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/68.

Activities will also focus on technical areas as detailed in other programme areas and on dam safety. This work will build on the results of SDG indicator 6.5.2 reporting and support countries in accelerating achievement of Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5. Subject to the availability of resources and according to specific needs, support could be provided in the following river basins: Amu Darya, Bug, Chu Talas, Comoé-Bia-Tanoé, Coto y Vecinos, Dniester, Euphrates-Tigris, Kura, Luapula, Mejerda, Mano, Mono, Neman, Niger, Ogoué-Ntem-Nyanga-Komo, Pedernales and Massacre, Sixaola, Songwe, Syr Darya as well as the Keta, Octopeque – Citala and Pre-Tashkent Aquifers.

Activities will include support to regional cooperation and to regional economic communities for development of regional frameworks for water cooperation in Africa (e.g., Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)), and in Latin America (e.g., Central American Commission for Environment and Development of the Central American Integration System (CCAD/SICA)).

Resource requirements: \$893,000.

1.4 Supporting implementation and compliance through the Implementation Committee

Objective: Facilitate, promote and safeguard implementation and application of and compliance with the Convention.

Proposed activities

The Implementation Committee's work will be governed by decision VI/1 on support to implementation and compliance. Under 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, which can help to reduce tensions and promote peace. 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 by providing legal and technical support to cooperation in specific transboundary basins. It will contribute to activities related to promotion of accession to the Convention and interpretation of its provisions.

Resource requirements: \$182,500.

Possible partners: Conference of Ibero-American Water Directors, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) project, Global Water Partnership (GWP) and its regional water partnerships, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), non-governmental organizations (e.g., International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) and World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF)), regional economic communities in Africa and Latin America (e.g., ECOWAS, ECCAS, SICA/CCAD and West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)), regional intergovernmental organizations (e.g., African Ministerial Council on Water, League of Arab States, Organization of American States, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), regional development banks, river basin organizations (e.g., Dniester Commission, Gambia River Basin Development Organization, Lake Chad Basin Commission, Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Mono Basin Authority, Niger Basin Authority, Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM), Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), Mano River Union and Volta Basin Authority), University of Geneva/Geneva Water Hub, University of Northumbria, United Nations country teams, departments and agencies (e.g., United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), regional commissions and World Bank.

B. Programme area 2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins to address pressures on water resources

Responsible bodies: Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents.

Rationale: Joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters and information exchange are key obligations under the Convention. Information and data exchange is fundamental for developing cooperation. The guidance developed under the Convention, including the publications *Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters*²¹ and *Good Practices and Lessons Learned in Data-sharing in Transboundary Basins* (forthcoming), promote a step-by-step approach, facilitating progressive improvement of monitoring, assessment and data-sharing. However, significant challenges remain in practical development of monitoring, assessment and data-sharing on the ground and application of the guidance. New technologies represent opportunities for enhanced scope and efficiency of monitoring processes, but their use is still limited in transboundary basins. Furthermore, support is required for the development of actions on the basis of pressures identified, for example, for developing action programmes, setting up water quality objectives and criteria, taking additional measures for protection of groundwaters and of biodiversity, and implementing other requirements of the Convention on water quality and prevention of pollution, especially in the light of climate change.

2.1 Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing

Lead Parties: Finland, Senegal.

Objective: 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-sharing between riparian countries.

Proposed activities

A global workshop on the use of new technologies and innovation for monitoring and assessment, as well as data-sharing, will highlight the opportunities for and examples of using artificial intelligence, remote sensing and other technologies, as well as citizen science, in transboundary basins.

Up to two regional workshops on monitoring, information and data will be organized to promote the use of guidance materials developed in this area, which will be combined with other regional workshops.

To facilitate the uptake of guidance materials on monitoring, assessment and information exchange, an online toolkit will be prepared based on the publication *Good Practices and Lessons Learned in Data-sharing in Transboundary Basins*.

Tailored assistance and support for developing and operationalizing joint or coordinated monitoring or information and data exchange, based on the guidance available, will be provided in the extended Drin River basin and, with a focus on groundwater monitoring, the Cijevna/Cem River basin. Assistance may be provided in other basins subject to availability of resources.

Resource requirements: \$916,500.

²¹ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/70.

2.2 Improving water quality, including through pollution prevention and control

Lead Parties: Hungary, Senegal.

Objective: Support countries in improving water quality in transboundary basins on the basis of assessment of pressures from sectoral activities and impacts from climate change.

Proposed activities

Up to two regional workshops will be organized on prevention/reduction of point and diffuse pollution, including regulatory and compliance assurance mechanisms in water management, which will be combined with other regional workshops. Linkages between climate change and water quality will be considered.

Meetings of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents will be serviced jointly with the Industrial Accidents Convention secretariat. The following activities will be carried out in cooperation with the Industrial Accidents Convention:

One global workshop on good practices and guidance for preventing water pollution will be organized under the Joint Expert Group to cover the aspects of early warning and climate change impacts. This workshop will support improving linkages and cooperation between disaster and water communities as well as transboundary basin organizations, and will help to implement the Sendai Framework.

Guidance documents on point and diffuse pollution will be promoted, including those developed by the Joint Expert Group.

In one pilot basin, subject to the availability of resources, capacity will be enhanced in emergency preparedness and prevention of accidental pollution from tailings storage facilities.

Synergies: with areas 3.2, 3.6 and 4.

Resource requirements: \$354,000 (the costs of activities related to the Joint Expert Group are shared with the Industrial Accidents Convention).

Possible partners: GWP, INBO, International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), UNESCO, UNDP, UNEP World Water Quality Alliance and World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

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

Responsible bodies: Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management for areas 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7; Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment for area 3.4; Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus for area 3.3.

Rationale: Integrated water resources management, as required by the Convention and Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5, 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 ecosystems' sustainability.

Trade-offs between water, food and energy can hinder regional cooperation and peace and slow down climate action in transboundary basins. 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, cooperative nexus solutions and investments can be identified. These make it possible to provide benefits for multiple sectors, foster cooperation for more sustainable and collaborative approaches to development, and promote peaceful water management.

When discussions in transboundary basins focus on water quantities, knowledge about mechanisms, tools and practices in water allocation can provide possibilities to address water availability issues among users. Both surface waters and groundwaters need to be considered

to ensure sustainable management of water resources, and their conjunctive management is especially needed to adapt to climate change. Additionally, managing land, freshwater, coastal and marine resources holistically – from source to sea – is critical to protect oceans and manage freshwater, as well as land resources sustainably. The source-to-sea approach can support more coordinated governance and management. Transboundary cooperation also needs to be enhanced to ensure the conservation and, where necessary, restoration of freshwater and water-related ecosystems and fight biodiversity loss, which in turn contribute to the sustainability of water resources. Transboundary water cooperation and the application of integrated water resources management need to be underpinned by strong national water governance that promotes intersectionality.

3.1 Promoting integrated water resources management in transboundary basins

Lead Parties: Estonia, Zimbabwe.

Objective: Support the application of integrated water resources management, in line with the Convention.

Proposed activities

Up to two thematic sessions on different aspects of integrated water resources management, such as on transboundary basin management plan development and mainstreaming gender perspectives, will be organized at Convention intergovernmental meetings.

Resource requirements: \$70,000.

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

Lead Party: Finland.

Objective: 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.

Proposed activities

The *Methodology for Assessing the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus in Transboundary Basins and Experiences from its Application: Synthesis*²² will be promoted through regional and global events organized under the Convention, and by contributing to partners' events. Rather than leading further applications of the Methodology on the ground, the secretariat will act as a connector between countries and organizations interested in implementing the Methodology and/or a nexus assessment, and potential partners on the ground who may have capacity to support the implementation of such plans.

The Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus will meet twice and continue supporting global capacity-building and experience sharing on transboundary nexus, with the aim of mainstreaming nexus into global intergovernmental environmental and climate processes. The meetings will have a thematic scope and will be organized back-to-back with other events, such as global workshops under the Convention or relevant sectoral meetings or forums (e.g., on energy, agriculture) organized by partners. The Task Force will also inform and discuss activities under other programme areas, as relevant.

Capacity-building on the water-energy nexus in transboundary basins will continue, including in cooperation with the ECE Sustainable Energy Division, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and other partners. The climate resilience of energy systems and specific technologies (e.g., hydropower, hydrogen), the water-dependency of energy policy measures and the role of transboundary cooperation as an enabler of clean energy transition at the regional level will be investigated through meetings, papers and/or

²² United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/55.

webinars and will build on the publication *Towards Sustainable Renewable Energy Investment and Deployment: Trade-offs and Opportunities with Water Resources and the Environment*.²³

Support to operationalize solutions and investments will continue in Central Asia and the Western Balkans. The project “Regional mechanisms for the low-carbon, climate-resilient transformation of the energy-water-land nexus in Central Asia” (2024–2028) will be implemented in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Scientific Information Centre of the Inter-State Coordination Water Commission of Central Asia (SIC-ICWC), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with funds from the International Climate Initiative of Germany. The project will deliver policy packages and regional-, basin- and national-level meetings, providing support to National Policy Dialogues in Central Asia, and leveraging existing synergies with the ECE Sustainable Energy Division’s work. Follow-up activities to the dialogue on water-energy for climate action in the Drina River basin will include one workshop, one white paper on hydropower cooperation in said basin, and related capacity-building and exchange of experience through the Task Force.

Resource requirements: \$2,122,000.

3.3 Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context

Lead Parties: Hungary, Namibia.

Objective: Raise capacity on 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.

Proposed activities

Up to two regional, basin or bilateral workshops or workshop sessions on transboundary water allocation and complementary approaches will be organized to build capacity and promote use of the *Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context*²⁴ and its *Summary Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context*.²⁵ The workshops, which will be combined with other workshops, will aim to provide participants with tools and approaches to help address and reconcile sectoral water demands through an integrated approach to transboundary water allocation, water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus and related topics, as needed.

Practical synergies and linkages between national and transboundary allocation approaches will be promoted in workshops or sessions with countries and organizations involved in national water allocation activities.

Synergies: with areas 1.3 and 3.2.

Resource requirements: \$230,000.

3.4 Promoting conjunctive management of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters

Lead Parties: Estonia, the Gambia.

Objective: Promoting conjunctive water management of surface waters and groundwaters by increasing understanding of its benefits and supporting transition from spontaneous to planned conjunctive use and management in transboundary basins.

²³ United Nations publication, ECE/ENERGY/127.

²⁴ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/64.

²⁵ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/71.

Proposed activities

Following an analysis of best practices in the application of conjunctive water management at the transboundary and domestic levels, policy guidance will be developed to provide advice on conjunctive management of surface waters and groundwaters, with a focus on transboundary basins. The policy guidance will emphasize synergies with the *Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters*²⁶ and the guidance documents on monitoring and assessment developed under the Convention. These activities will be undertaken under the auspices of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, with the help of a dedicated expert group.

Input on the topic of conjunctive water management will be provided at regional workshops organized under the Convention and training sessions organized by partner organizations, as relevant.

Resource requirements: \$292,000.

3.5 Source-to-sea: linking governance and management of transboundary freshwaters and the coastal and marine environment

Lead Parties: Slovenia and Panama (to be confirmed).

Objective: Support countries in understanding the benefits of the source-to-sea approach in transboundary basins and in implementing such an approach.

Proposed activities

A publication entitled *Practical Guide for the Implementation of the Source-to-Sea Approach in Transboundary Basins* (launch envisaged at Third United Nations Ocean Conference (Nice, France, 9–13 June 2025)) will be developed to increase understanding of the need for and benefits of the source-to-sea approach and its significance in integrated water resource management, ecosystem conservation and sustainability.

Up to two regional workshops on the source-to-sea approach will be organized, which will be combined with other regional workshops, to build capacity in the practical application of source-to-sea management principles by offering actionable steps, methodologies and best practices.

Resource requirements: \$291,500.

3.6 Promoting conservation and restoration of transboundary freshwater and water-related ecosystems

Lead Parties: France, Slovenia and Zambia (to be confirmed).

Objective: Raise awareness and capacity regarding conservation and restoration of transboundary freshwater and water-related ecosystems and highlight the need to address biodiversity loss in transboundary basins.

Proposed activities

A global workshop on transboundary freshwater and water-related ecosystems will be organized focusing on conservation and restoration of ecosystems, and ecological continuity at the transboundary level. It will draw links with work under other related multilateral environment agreements, particularly CBD, the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and of relevant actors, such as IUCN. The workshop will also build on and inform activities under other relevant programme areas, such as activities on water quality, pollution prevention and control and climate change.

The ecosystem approach, including conservation and restoration of ecosystems, will be integrated into relevant regional and basin projects under the Convention.

²⁶ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/40.

Synergies: with areas 2.2, 3.2, 3.5 and 4.

Resource requirements: \$305,700.

3.7 Supporting National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

Lead Party/organizations: Romania, European Commission, OECD and the secretariat.

Objective: 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 (EECCA).

Proposed activities

Within the framework of the projects EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data programme for the Eastern Partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and its follow up project and “Regional mechanisms for the low-carbon, climate-resilient transformation of the energy-water-land nexus in Central Asia”, the National Policy Dialogues will continue to support implementation of integrated water resources management at the national, transboundary and regional levels. The work will focus on improving the legal, regulatory, administrative, technical and economic frameworks for water management.

Activities will assist countries in achieving the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, and acceding to and implementing the Water Convention, the Protocol on Water and Health and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements. In countries with a European Union Association Agreement, or with other types of European Union cooperation agreements, the transposition and operationalization of the principles and approaches of the respective European Union water legislation will be supported. Links will be exploited with the European Union long-term policy objectives for the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020, the European Union Strategy on Central Asia and the European Green Deal.

National steering committees including stakeholders vital to integrated water resources management will continue to lead the country-specific dialogue processes. Dialogue outputs will include policy packages, such as new legislative acts, ministerial orders, development strategies and background studies, as well as pilot projects for further replication. Support for drafting and implementing transboundary water cooperation agreements, including the establishment and support of joint bodies, will be provided.

Exchange of experience between countries of EECCA and other regions of the world will be promoted through regional meetings and by using regional and global Convention events. Such events will also serve as capacity development opportunities for water specialists from target countries. Moreover, experience in establishing and running National Policy Dialogues on water will be shared with interested countries and organizations.

Work under the National Policy Dialogues will be closely coordinated, provide inputs to and benefit from other programme of work activities. Specific links will be built with the work on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, especially for the regional project in Central Asia, on water quality and water-related ecosystems and on adapting to climate change in transboundary basins. Additionally, the work will: contribute to country-level implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health and other relevant ECE conventions, with focus on the Industrial Accidents Convention; and establish stronger linkages with energy sector development, especially in Central Asia. Activities in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus are subject to confirmation of funding.

Synergies: especially with areas 2.2, 3.2, 3.6 and 4.

Resource requirements: \$2,939,800.

Possible partners: Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), CBD, Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its

Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, Ramsar Convention, CMS, Industrial Accidents Convention, EBRD, Environment Agency Austria, European Commission, Finnish Environment Institute, FAO, GEF, GEF IW:LEARN, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), GWP, IGRAC, IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, INBO, International Office for Water of France (OiEau), International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH), IUCN, IWAC, International Water Management Institute, OECD, Protocol on Water and Health, Regional Centre for Groundwater Management in Latin America and the Caribbean (CeReGAS), regional seas commissions, river basin organizations (e.g., International Sava River Basin Commission, Mekong River Commission, OKACOM, OMVS), Oregon State University, Southern African Development Community Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI), SIC-ICWC, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Technical University of Munich, University College Cork, University of Eastern Finland, University of Northumbria, UNCCD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, DESA, regional commissions and WWF.

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

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

Lead Parties: The Netherlands and another Party.

Rationale: Climate change impacts on water resources are 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. Many transboundary basins are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Transboundary water cooperation on climate change adaptation and mitigation is not only useful to prevent negative impacts of unilateral adaptation measures but can also make adaptation and mitigation more effective and efficient.

Over the years, work under the Convention has progressed thematically from vulnerability assessments to more advanced stages of adaptation, such as implementation of and facilitating funding for transboundary adaptation measures. Efforts under the Convention also focus on supporting mainstreaming transboundary water cooperation into global and national climate processes.

Activities are guided by the Strategy for future work on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins under the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2015/4).

Objectives:

- Increase adaptive capacity and improve cooperation in climate change adaptation and mitigation in transboundary basins, concerning water quality and quantity;
- Increase mainstreaming of water and transboundary cooperation in climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction at the national and transboundary levels and in intergovernmental global processes (e.g., UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, 2030 Agenda).

Proposed activities

Activities of the Global Network of Basins Working on Climate Change Adaptation will be further supported by the organization of up to two Global Network meetings and/or webinars, in cooperation with INBO. Two Task Force on Water and Climate meetings will be organized, as well as one global workshop on transboundary climate change adaptation and mitigation to facilitate exchange of experience, good practices and lessons learned. These events will support integration of climate change adaptation into national and transboundary water management policies and practices, and will focus, among other things, on building resilience to climate change, including disasters such as floods and droughts and the negative impacts on water quality, in transboundary basins as well as in the water and sanitation sector.

In cooperation with partners, a knowledge product will be developed containing good practices on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins based on recent developments within the Global Network and beyond, findings of the thematic workshops and the publication *Water and Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins: Lessons Learned and Good Practices* (ECE/MP.WAT/45). The secretariat will also contribute to and co-publish an update of the publication *Transboundary Flood Risk Management: Experiences from the UNECE Region* (ECE/MP.WAT/31), together with WMO.

Subject to availability of dedicated resources and based on past activities and the Convention's guidance documents, up to three basin-level projects promoting transboundary cooperation in adaptation to climate change will be supported in pilot basins (e.g., Chu-Talas, Dniester, Bug, one or two Middle East and North Africa region basins or other basins). These might include the development of vulnerability assessments, adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies, prioritization of mutually beneficial adaptation measures and the integration of climate change adaptation into river basin or shared aquifers management planning. Experiences will be shared for replication in other basins.

The importance of water and transboundary cooperation in adaptation and mitigation will be promoted within global policy processes on climate and disasters (e.g., under UNFCCC, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)) through regular communication with climate change and disaster communities, providing input to negotiations processes, for example, related to the global goal on adaptation and Global Stocktake. Events will be organized with partners to improve coherence between water, transboundary cooperation, climate change and disaster risk reduction at global occasions (e.g., Conferences of the Parties to UNFCCC, Global Platforms on Disaster Risk Reduction).

Mainstreaming of water and transboundary cooperation into national climate-related documents will be supported through analysing how transboundary water cooperation is integrated into new and revised Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans and discussing and developing joint approaches to addressing transboundary issues in climate-related documents (e.g., Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, national climate strategies and plans), including through developing a policy paper.

Financing climate change adaptation will be considered in all activities, including through increased cooperation with climate funds (see also programme area 5). The importance of water for climate change mitigation will also be promoted.

Synergies: with areas 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6 and 5.

Resource requirements: \$1,460,500.

Possible partners: Adaptation Fund, Alliance for Global Water Adaptation, European Commission, European Investment Bank (EIB), GEF IW:LEARN, GIZ, Global Centre on Adaptation, Green Climate Fund, GWP, INBO, IUCN, OSCE, Protocol on Water and Health, Stockholm Environment Institute, SIWI, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UNDP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNDRR, World Bank, WMO, WWF and joint bodies.

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

Responsible body: Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.

Lead Parties: The Netherlands, Switzerland.

Rationale: The different stages of transboundary water cooperation and management (developing agreements, setting up joint bodies and defining and implementing measures and investments at the national and basin levels) require funding. Countries and basins organizations must mobilize adequate funding and financing support from different sources. However, the current lack of sustainable financing models often prevents them from deepening their cooperation and implementing measures and projects. This affects the long-term sustainability of shared basins' development, socioeconomic conditions in basins and

the protection of the environment. Many countries face financial capacity constraints and must make difficult decisions on how to allocate scarce public funds. Addressing the urgent need to accelerate sustainable financing models and options for joint bodies, cooperation processes and basin development activities through awareness-raising and good practice exchange and dialogue between countries, river basin organizations and relevant technical and financial partners is therefore crucial.

Objectives:

- Highlight the importance of funding and financing transboundary water cooperation and management and build understanding of enhancing the financial sustainability of transboundary water management institutions and implementation programmes;
- Facilitate knowledge-sharing and peer learning on funding and financing options to enhance the sustainability of transboundary water cooperation and management;
- Support national authorities, especially for new Parties, and joint bodies in identifying and mobilizing financial resources from various sources to enhance transboundary water cooperation and management.

Proposed activities

The policy brief *How to Accelerate the Funding and Financing of Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development? Opportunities and Challenges*²⁷ will be disseminated. Cooperation with international and regional financial institutions (e.g., Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank (AFDB), EBRD, EIB, GEF, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and World Bank) will be further strengthened through regular meetings and contribution to their relevant events. Cooperation with global climate funds (e.g., Adaptation Fund, Green Climate Fund) will be intensified in order to include transboundary water cooperation and management in climate funding mechanisms and enhance the capacity of countries and river basin organizations to access these mechanisms.

The secretariat will initiate and strengthen cooperation with other relevant private sector-related organizations (e.g., Disclosure Insight Action (CDP), CEO Water Mandate, UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI), IUCN) and with the private finance sector (e.g. relevant financial institutions, philanthropic foundations) to raise awareness on the importance of considering the issue of funding and financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development in their work and to explore synergies by providing inputs to their tools, guidance documents and strategies, contributing to their events and organizing joint sessions in global events when relevant. The secretariat will also provide input to the work of GEF IW:LEARN 5.

Support will be provided to up to five new Parties to the Convention in identifying funding and financing options to implement the Convention in practice, through the provision of tailored advice when developing their implementation plan, and the organization of round tables with technical and financial partners to enable matching of existing funding needs and financial opportunities.

The secretariat will organize a third global workshop and contribute to or co-organize up to two regional or basin training sessions/workshops on how to accelerate funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and management and adapt to climate change in a transboundary context, while adopting a water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus approach.

Synergies: with areas 1.2, 3.2, 3.7 and 4.

Resource requirements: \$476,800.

Possible partners: ADB, AfDB, CDP, CEO Water Mandate, EBRD, EIB, GEF, GEF IW:LEARN, Geneva Water Hub, IDB, OECD, UNCDF, UNEP-FI, World Bank, WWF,

²⁷ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/72.

other multilateral development banks and financing institutions, bilateral development agencies, joint bodies and relevant private sector representatives.

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

Responsible bodies: Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

Lead organization: Secretariat, in cooperation with UNESCO.

Rationale: In 2015, decision VII/2 on reporting under the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/49/Add.2) introduced a regular reporting mechanism under the Convention to review and enhance the Convention's implementation 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,²⁸ including indicator 6.5.2 (proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation). Reporting under the Convention for Parties is combined with reporting on indicator 6.5.2 in order to increase synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. The pilot reporting carried out in 2017–2018 allowed for the improvement and clarification of the template, which was subsequently adopted for future reporting exercises at the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Astana, 10–12 October 2018), through decision VIII/1 on reporting under the Convention, with minor amendments introduced in 2022.

Three reporting exercises, held in 2017–2018, 2020–2021 and 2023–2024, under the Convention and on indicator 6.5.2, have shown the numerous benefits of reporting, such as improved national, basin, regional or global cooperation between water actors, enhanced political attention to 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 also revealed challenges and difficulties encountered in reporting.

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

Objectives: Keep under review progress on transboundary water cooperation worldwide and in implementing the Convention, contribute to the follow-up and review of Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5 and indicator 6.5.2, and foster progress by:

- Promoting the importance of reporting under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and the derived benefits;
- Strengthening countries' capacity to report and enhance the quality and coherence of reports;
- Analysing, publishing and communicating on progress on transboundary water cooperation worldwide and in implementing the Convention.

Proposed activities

In 2026–2027, the fourth 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 national reports and preparation of global reports on indicator 6.5.2 and on the Convention's implementation. The results will be presented to the eleventh Meeting of the Parties session, and other global events.

²⁸ A/RES/71/313.

An online reporting system will be developed, taking into account other existing systems (e.g., UN-Water Sustainable Development Goal 6 Data Portal), lessons learned from other multilateral environmental agreements and the need for coordination with indicator 6.5.1 (see ECE/MP.WAT/63/Add.2, decision IX/2 on reporting, annex). The online system will facilitate the improved reliability of the data reported by countries, as well as the secretariat's analysis of the reports. The reporting template may be adjusted to respond to the requirements of the online format. To support countries in reporting online, guidance material may be prepared and online training sessions organized.

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 (e.g., regional commissions, GWP and its Country Water Partnerships) to fill gaps in reporting or to improve coordination of basin-level reporting.

Resource requirements: \$657,500.

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

Objective: Enhance impact and use of the reports to advance transboundary water cooperation by promoting their use to facilitate gap analysis and actions at national, basin and global levels.

Proposed activities

Results of the third reporting exercise will be widely disseminated at global and regional meetings. Partners and donors will be encouraged to use the results of reporting for targeting their activities to support the establishment of operational arrangements; in this regard, upon request, input to partners will be provided by the secretariat. Data on gender in transboundary water cooperation will be disseminated through dedicated efforts.

Countries' capacity to make use of the reports and to move from reporting to addressing the gaps identified and accelerating achievement of target 6.5 will be strengthened through organization of or contribution to global, regional and national capacity-building activities. These will promote the sharing of experiences and discussions on how countries can use the reports to accelerate transboundary cooperation, and how to integrate transboundary water cooperation reporting within other national and regional efforts. Regular exchanges on reporting exercise results will be fostered in the framework of activities under the Convention at all levels.

The secretariat will cooperate with partners (e.g., regional commissions, GWP and its Country Water Partnerships) to promote the analysis of reports and to assist countries and basins in developing responses to accelerate the achievement of target 6.5. Subject to the availability of resources, countries or basins will be supported in designing road maps or action plans to foster transboundary cooperation based on indicator 6.5.2 reports. These efforts will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

Synergies: with areas 1.2 and 1.3.

Resource requirements: \$419,000.

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

G. Programme area 7: Partnerships, communication and input to global processes

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

Rationale: Partners are key for the Convention’s implementation. They play an increasingly important role in the Convention’s globalization. Similarly, coherence and synergies with global and regional policy processes are key in ensuring implementation of the Convention together with other global and regional commitments. Communication, including through social media, and knowledge management are important cross-cutting activities for all programme areas to improve understanding and implementation of the Convention and enhance the impacts of products and activities.

7.1 Cooperation with UN-Water, global and regional partners and other multilateral environmental agreements and contribution to policy processes

Objectives:

- Strengthen cooperation and synergies with different partners at the global and regional levels, including with other multilateral environmental agreements;
- Contribute to global and regional processes related to water, under the United Nations and beyond, and lead, where relevant, the promotion of transboundary water cooperation and its benefits.

Proposed activities

The secretariat will continue to cooperate under UN-Water and contribute to its work. This includes contributing to implementation of the United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation and its upcoming collaborative implementation plan, for example, through continuing cooperation with other United Nations agencies, co-chairing of the UN-Water Expert Group on Transboundary Waters and Expert Group on Water and Climate Change, contributions to World Water Days, the United Nations World Water Development Report and to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

Support will be provided to the preparatory processes for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference and the 2028 United Nations Conference on the Final 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. In addition, input to highlight the importance of transboundary water cooperation will be provided to other global processes, such as World Water Forums, other relevant United Nations conferences (e.g., High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, United Nations Ocean Conference) or Regional Forums for Sustainable Development. The Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition will be built upon to strengthen multi-actor advocacy on transboundary water cooperation.

Cooperation will be sought with other multilateral environmental agreements (e.g., CBD, Ramsar Convention, UNFCCC, Espoo Convention, Aarhus Convention, Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, Protocol on Water and Health, Industrial Accidents Convention). Cooperation will be sought with UNCCD on integrated drought management issues, sharing best practices and capacity-building.

Resource requirements: \$469,000.

7.2 Communication and knowledge management

Objectives:

- Disseminate information on the Convention’s activities and results through a broad range of communication tools;
- Strengthen delivery of programme outputs by advancing knowledge management.

Proposed activities

Activities will include the production, publication and printing of information and communication materials (e.g., leaflets, brochures and booklets in the relevant United Nations languages), media work, interviews and press releases, and the regular revision and

update of the Convention website. A brochure will be developed that provides a reader-friendly overview of existing publications. Social media channels – X, Facebook and LinkedIn – will continue to be used to build a support base and reach out to new constituencies. Video materials may be produced to illustrate the Convention’s global impact. Regular information updates will be provided to stakeholders through the Convention’s newsletter. Publications will be reprinted as needed.

Tailored communication materials or policy papers on the Convention for diplomats and parliamentarians will be developed and disseminated to raise awareness about the benefits of acceding to and implementing the Convention.

Resource requirements: \$308,000.

Possible partners: multilateral environmental agreements, UN-Water, United Nations country teams, departments, agencies and regional commissions.

IV. Overview of resource requirements

38. 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 eleventh session of the Meeting of the Parties. They do not include costs 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.

39. The secretariat will continue to produce the agendas, reports and other documents of the meetings and sessions 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 all United Nations official languages,²⁹ without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources. In addition to the documents mandated elsewhere in the programme of work, by Meeting of the Parties decisions 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 and by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Financing to the two Working Groups;
- (b) Documents related to IWAC;
- (c) Documents related to the different programme areas.

40. Interpretation into all United Nations official languages³⁰ 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.

41. The secretariat will support the programme of work’s implementation. The core composition of the secretariat staff will be: 1 P-5 (Secretary of the Convention); 3.5 P-4s; 9 P-3s and 2 P-2s (to lead and support implementation of various programme areas), and 5 G staff members (to provide administrative support). All the above-mentioned staff will be funded from extrabudgetary resources, with the exception of 1.5 P-4s and 1 G staff funded from regular budget resources. Junior professional officers sponsored by Parties will support

²⁹ Pending adoption of the Draft decision on promoting equal and effective participation of all Parties in sessions of the Meeting of the Parties and other meetings under the Convention through translation and interpretation into Arabic, Chinese and Spanish by the Meeting of the Parties and subsequent approval by the relevant United Nations bodies.

³⁰ Ibid.

the team. More staff might be recruited to implement additional activities, if additional funds are received, especially for project activities in basins.

Overview of resource requirements for 2025–2027

(United States dollars)

No.	Programme area or activity	Item	Resource requirements
	Working Groups, Ad Hoc Working Group and Bureau meetings	Travel, interpretation	494 000
		Staff	539 000
	Eleventh session of Meeting of the Parties	Travel, interpretation, reporting service, etc.	336 800
		Staff	262 000
Subtotal (Convention bodies)			1 631 800
1	Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and its implementation drawing on the benefits of cooperation		
1.1	Increasing awareness of and supporting national processes towards accession to the Convention	National, subregional, basin and regional level workshops, ^a promotional events, training sessions	888 000
		Staff	1 234 700
1.2	Increasing capacity for implementation of the Convention at the national and regional levels, especially for new Parties	Events at national, basin and regional levels	199 000
		Support to regional/partners activities ^b	10 000
		Staff	588 500
1.3	Supporting development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies	Global workshop ^c	98 000
		Online toolkit	10 000
		Regional- and basin-level workshops	165 000
		Staff	438 500
		Drin project	181 500
1.4	Supporting implementation and compliance through the Implementation Committee	Travel	72 000
		Staff	110 500
Subtotal area 1			3 995 700
2	Programme area 2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins to address pressures on water resources		
2.1	Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing	Global workshop	119 000
		Regional workshops	69 000
		Online toolkit	10 000
		Staff	283 000
		Basin projects in Drin and Cijevna/Cem	435 500
2.2	Improving water quality, including through pollution prevention and control (the costs of activities related to the Joint Expert Group are shared with the Industrial Accidents Convention).	Global workshop	56 500
		Regional workshops	72 000
		Staff	225 500
Subtotal area 2			1 270 500
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	15 000
		Staff	55 000

<i>No.</i>	<i>Programme area or activity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Resource requirements</i>
3.2	Supporting intersectoral dialogues and assessments through the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach	Task Force meetings	88 500
		Support to regional/partners activities	20 000
		Staff	223 000
		Basin/regional projects in Drina and Central Asia	1 790 500
3.3	Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context	Regional, basin and national workshops/activities	81 000
		Staff	149 000
3.4	Promoting conjunctive management of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters	Policy guidance (expert group meetings, consultancy)	90 000
		Input to regional workshops (travel)	6 000
		Staff	196 000
3.5	Source-to-sea: linking governance and management of transboundary freshwaters and the coastal and marine environment	Practical guide	22 000
		Regional workshops	76 000
		Staff	193 500
3.6	Promoting conservation and restoration of transboundary freshwater and water-related ecosystems	Global workshop	119 000
		Input to regional workshops (travel)	13 200
		Staff	173 500
3.7	Supporting National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia	Activities in Central Asia	547 800
		Activities in Eastern Europe and Caucasus	820 000
		Staff	1 572 000
Subtotal area 3			6 251 000
4	Programme area 4: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins		
		Global workshop, Task Force and Global Network meetings	273 500
		Advocacy events	50 000
		Knowledge products	100 000
		Staff	1 037 000
Subtotal area 4			1 460 500
5	Programme area 5: Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development		
		Global workshop	132 800
		Support to national, regional and global events	40 000
		Staff	304 000
Subtotal area 5			476 800
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	Online database	100 000
		Consultancy	40 000
		Support to national, basin and regional events	20 000
		Staff	497 500

<i>No.</i>	<i>Programme area or activity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Resource requirements</i>
6.2	Promoting the use of reports for enhancing transboundary water cooperation	Consultancy	20 000
		Support to pilot projects	6 000
		Regional workshops	58 000
		Staff	335 000
Subtotal area 6			1 076 500
7	Programme area 7: Partnerships, communication and input to global processes		
7.1	Cooperation with UN-Water, global and regional partners and other multilateral environmental agreements and contribution to policy processes	Travel	77 000
		Consultancy	25 000
		Staff	367 000
7.2	Communication and knowledge management	Communication materials (brochures, leaflets, videos, etc.)	88 000
		Staff	220 000
Subtotal area 7			777 000
Subtotal (programme areas 1–7 and Convention bodies)			16 939 800
Overheads (7–13 per cent) (rounded)			1 962 200
Total (rounded)			18 902 000

^a Costs for national, basin and regional workshops usually cover travel of experts and staff, consultancy, contractual services (room, catering, interpretation).

^b Costs for global workshops usually cover travel of experts, hospitality and, if needed, technical support and interpretation.

^c Costs to support regional/partners activities usually cover travel of staff and relevant experts.