

## Submission by UNECE for the Eighth workshop under the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation

### *Taking stock of the Glasgow– Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation*

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and more specifically the secretariat of [the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes \(Water Convention\)](#) hosted by UNECE would like to propose to include the topic of transboundary cooperation in climate change adaptation into the 8<sup>th</sup> (final) workshop under the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation.

Transboundary cooperation on adaptation has become increasingly important because the impacts of climate change span national borders, 60% of freshwater flow and 40% of the world's population are located in shared basins and 153 countries worldwide share transboundary rivers, lakes and/or aquifers. Transboundary cooperation in mitigation and adaptation is thus crucial to address climate change more effectively by reducing uncertainties through exchange of data, enlarging the planning space and better coherence of measures at the basin scale. In addition, it also supports regional integration and sustainable development<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, as it was shown in the [recent study of the Adaptation Fund](#), transboundary approach to adaptation can achieve cost savings and more efficient use of both financial and human resources. Finally, transboundary projects offer many opportunities for learning and knowledge transfer, about what works, where and why, across local, national and transboundary scales<sup>2</sup>.

There are a few examples of basins where transboundary adaptation strategies and plans were developed and are implemented, for example, in the Danube, the Dniester, the Neman and the Rhine in the Pan-European region as well as globally in the Amazon, the Chu-Talas, Lake Chad, the Mekong, the Niger, Lake Victoria, and the Volta<sup>3</sup>. The recent report of the progress on climate change adaptation in the [Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation](#) is available [here](#). It provides a very valuable source of information on transboundary action on adaptation in shared basins<sup>4</sup> incl. the aforementioned ones.

Experience of the Global network shows that the ingredients for success in transboundary adaptation include good communication, monitoring and data sharing, inter-sectoral cooperation, capacity support, existence of transboundary basin organisations and existence of funding mechanisms accepting transboundary/ regional proposals such as the Adaptation Fund<sup>5</sup>. Sharing good practices in climate change adaptation more generally (including from a transboundary perspective) also helps build

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<sup>1</sup> UN World Water Development Report 2020: Water and Climate Change, <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-world-water-development-report-2020>

<sup>2</sup> Transboundary Approaches to Climate Adaptation: Lessons Learned from the Adaptation Fund's Regional Projects and Programmes, <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Transboundary-Adaptation-final-April-2022.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> UN World Water Development Report 2020: Water and Climate Change, <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-world-water-development-report-2020>

<sup>4</sup> Progress on climate change adaptation in the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation, [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/Global\\_network\\_overview\\_pilot%20projects\\_progress\\_May2023\\_ENGL\\_Final\\_0.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/Global_network_overview_pilot%20projects_progress_May2023_ENGL_Final_0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Water and Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins: Lessons Learned and Good Practices, <https://unece.org/environment-policy/publications/water-and-climate-change-adaptation-transboundary-basins-lessons>

expertise, allowing countries and basins to learn from one another and to understand better how to achieve, monitor, evaluate and improve progress in adaptation<sup>6</sup>.

The importance of water for adaptation was strengthened at UNFCCC COP 27 namely in [the decision on Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) which emphasizes the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring water and water-related ecosystems, including river basins, aquifers and lakes, and integration of water into countries adaptation efforts. [The decision on Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh Work Programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation](#) recognized that adaptation is a global challenge faced by regional dimension among others and refers to water, freshwater ecosystems and transboundary approaches as themes/areas to be taken into consideration for the capacity building workshops.

The 6th IPCC assessment report (2022)<sup>7</sup> recognizes transboundary risks as an important challenge stating that they give rise to new and unexpected types of risks, exacerbate existing stressors and constrain adaptation options. The report also adds that transboundary governance, for example, coordination and transboundary agreements are among important enablers for ecosystems to address climate change. In addition, the IPCC Synthesis Report (2023)<sup>8</sup> states that increasing transboundary risks are projected across the food, energy and water sectors which increases the need for climate-informed transboundary management, cooperation, responses and solutions through multi-national or regional governance processes.

Transboundary water cooperation and its benefits for climate change adaptation were acknowledged in the documents prepared in the framework of the Adaptation Committee, for example, in the technical papers [Approaches to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation](#) and [Methodologies for assessing adaptation needs and their application](#). To illustrate, the first paper analyses existing transboundary approaches to assessing adaptation progress and refers to the example of the transboundary water basins where there is a possibility to have a common monitoring system among riparian countries, to build a basin-wide evaluation system for adaptation actions, and to use a portfolio of monitoring and evaluation tools<sup>9</sup>. The second paper refers to the importance of cross-border and regional climate risks in transboundary basins which were identified by many countries in their NAPs. The paper also adds that based on transboundary risk assessment adaptation plans were developed in shared basins worldwide using participatory approaches where transboundary basin organizations played a crucial role in coordination<sup>10</sup>.

The work on adaptation planning under UNFCCC integrates regional/transboundary approaches. In particular, [Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process](#) require to “avoid negative transboundary impacts, especially on shared river basins or other ecosystems, while planning adaptation”<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, the possibilities for integrating transboundary water cooperation into NAPs

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<sup>6</sup> UN World Water Development Report 2020: Water and Climate Change, <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-world-water-development-report-2020>

<sup>7</sup> Climate change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, Technical summary, IPCC, 2022, [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGII\\_TechnicalSummary.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_TechnicalSummary.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> IPCC Synthesis Report: Climate Change, 2023, [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_SYR\\_FullVolume.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_FullVolume.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Approaches to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation, [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/AC\\_TP\\_GlobalGoalOnAdaptation.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/AC_TP_GlobalGoalOnAdaptation.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Methodologies for assessing adaptation needs and their application, [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/J0160\\_Adaptation%20Needs%20Technical%20Report%20final.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/J0160_Adaptation%20Needs%20Technical%20Report%20final.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [https://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun\\_adaptation\\_framework/application/pdf/naptechguidelines\\_eng\\_high\\_res.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/application/pdf/naptechguidelines_eng_high_res.pdf)

are explored in the dedicated technical supplement [Addressing Water in National Adaptation Plans](#)<sup>12</sup>. The recent publication [Progress in the formulation and implementation of NAPs](#) states that NAPs serve as an umbrella plan in the country, covering sectoral strategies, national plans as well as, where relevant, transboundary plans<sup>13</sup>. Examples, benefits and recommendations for integrating transboundary cooperation into adaptation planning and implementation are well-described in the publication [Regional approaches to adaptation planning and implementation](#)<sup>14</sup> where the Water Convention Secretariat provided inputs together with other partners.

Based on the [available NAPs](#), a lot of countries do include basin and watershed management as an important area in adaptation within their NAPs (e.g. Armenia, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia and Nepal). Moreover, quite a few countries refer to transboundary water cooperation as an adaptation measure in their NAPs, for example, Albania, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, State of Palestine, South Sudan, Sudan and Timor-Leste<sup>15</sup>. Although transboundary water management is better reflected in NAPs, improving water management on the basin level is included as an important measure to address climate change in [the NDCs](#) as well, for example, of such countries as Ghana, Pakistan, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam<sup>16</sup>.

In relation to measuring the progress in climate change adaptation in transboundary basins, SDG indicator 6.5.2 (“Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation”)<sup>17</sup> can be applied to understand the degree to which adaptation has been integrated into transboundary water cooperation<sup>18</sup>. For example, the reporting questions in the dedicated template on this indicator include whether climate change adaptation is part of the transboundary water management agreement or/and belongs to activities of the transboundary basin organisations<sup>19</sup>. In addition, SDG indicator 6.4.1 on water-use efficiency<sup>20</sup> can be used as a metrics to assess adaptation progress because it monitors the progress in water-use efficiency over time (measured as the ratio of dollar value added to the volume of water used).

Transboundary adaptation was also important part of the discussions through the series of the workshops under the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation especially in the fifth workshop *Changing mindsets and worldviews towards transformation in adaptation, with the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ wisdom, values and knowledge and consideration of crosscutting issues*. In particular, it provided a very successful example of transboundary cooperation in adaptation in the Orange-Senqu river basin from Lesotho, a member of the transboundary basin organization ORASECOM. The workshop also stated that GGA framework can facilitate transboundary adaptation, for example, by enabling mainstreaming of transboundary considerations into adaptation

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<sup>12</sup> [https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/gwp\\_nap\\_water\\_supplement.pdf](https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/gwp_nap_water_supplement.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/UNFCCC-NAP2021-Progress-report.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/UNFCCC-Regional%20Approaches-Small.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://napcentral.org/submitted-naps>

<sup>16</sup> <https://unfccc.int/NDCREG>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.unwater.org/our-work/integrated-monitoring-initiative-sdg-6/indicator-652-proportion-transboundary-basin-area>

<sup>18</sup> Approaches to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation, [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/AC\\_TP\\_GlobalGoalOnAdaptation.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/AC_TP_GlobalGoalOnAdaptation.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation: Global baseline for SDG indicator 6.5.2. France: UNESCO. Available at [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/publications/WAT\\_57/ECE\\_MP.WAT\\_57.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/publications/WAT_57/ECE_MP.WAT_57.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> <https://sdg6data.org/en/indicator/6.4.1>

and by involving transboundary organizations<sup>21</sup>. Thus, it is logical the transboundary dimension is taken further to GGA process and to be included as one of the questions into the final workshop, for example, as a process to enable more efficient adaptation and to avoid mal-adaptation together with other enablers such as coordination, inter-sectoral cooperation and improving synergies between various national and global policies. Potential topics to be included into the workshop can be:

- recommendations for including transboundary cooperation into GGA, for example, through involvement of transboundary basin organisations, integration of transboundary aspects into NAPs and NDCs, development of transboundary risk assessments, transboundary adaptation plans, knowledge exchange with other countries, transboundary early warning systems<sup>22</sup>, creation of a collection of best practices and lessons learned in transboundary adaptation and facilitating funding incl. from climate donors for transboundary adaptation;
- experience of the transboundary basin organisations in transboundary adaptation as well as in supporting national adaptation planning and implementation (for example, from the Amazon, the Danube, the Dniester, the Mekong, the Niger, the Okavango, the Rhine, Lake Victoria or the Volta basins); and
- examples of country adaptation policies such as NAPs which integrate transboundary and/or regional approaches (for example, Albania, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, State of Palestine, South Sudan, Sudan or Timor-Leste),

The Water Convention provides a unique global legal and intergovernmental framework for transboundary cooperation in general and also in climate change adaptation by supporting countries and basins through preparing guidance material (such as the [Guidance on water and adaptation to climate change](#) from 2009), capacity building, pilot projects on transboundary climate change adaptation, and the creation of a Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation. These activities are carried out in the framework of the Task Force on Water and Climate under the Water Convention. The Water Convention is ready to assist in contributing and/or facilitating contributions for the 8<sup>th</sup> workshop as well as for GGA process overall with regards to water, adaptation and transboundary cooperation.

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<sup>21</sup> Summary of the fifth workshop under the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation: Changing mindsets and worldviews towards transformation in adaptation, with the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ wisdom, values and knowledge and consideration of crosscutting issues <https://unfccc.int/event/4th-workshop-Glasgow-Sharm-el-Sheikh-wp-gga>

<sup>22</sup> Summary of the fifth workshop under the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation: Changing mindsets and worldviews towards transformation in adaptation, with the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ wisdom, values and knowledge and consideration of crosscutting issues <https://unfccc.int/event/4th-workshop-Glasgow-Sharm-el-Sheikh-wp-gga>