Transboundary Water Governance for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace

Waters Governance Program - Phase 5

Region
Global

Partners
IUCN & UNECE

Background information
Transboundary water bodies create hydrological, social and economic inter-dependencies between societies. While incorporating a potential for competition and conflict, they also provide opportunities for cooperation.

Project objective
Poverty alleviation, nature conservation, economic growth and peace are enhanced in target basins through sustainable management and governance of trans-boundary water resources.

Beneficiaries
National government institutions and agencies, municipal and provincial level governments, basin organizations, local communities, businesses and civil society.

Costs
Total: CHF 13'413'800
SDC: CHF 9'950'000

Duration
09.2022 – 06.2027

This program brings together complementary organisations, with IUCN working on transboundary surface water through its project Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE), and the 1992 UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes providing a guiding global framework, together building an integrated approach to transboundary water management.

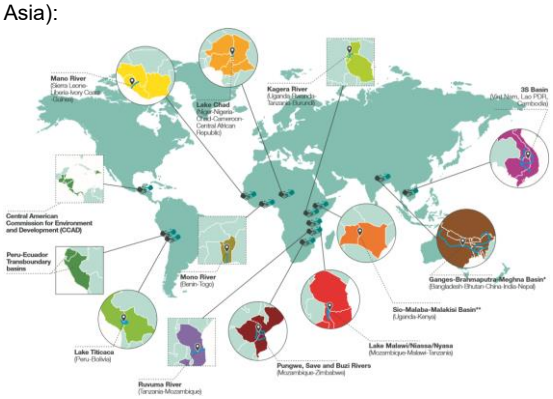
The Water Governance Program supports the capacities of stakeholders from local to transboundary levels in countries sharing river or lake basins to design and implement effective water management arrangements. It works on a shared vision, benefit-sharing principles and transparent and coherent institutional frameworks. It is implemented in three regions through demonstration at basin-level, learning support, dialogue facilitation, leadership development, and the provision of advice and technical support.

With over 40% of the world's population living in 275 transboundary basins, cooperation over water management is essential for people's well-being, sustainable development, political stability and peace. Today, the complexities of sharing water among States require innovation relative to traditional approaches to water governance, calling for improved water diplomacy across multiple levels.

The goal of the Water Governance Program is to improve secured and safe access to water in order to reduce water-related conflicts, and to protect or restore water-related ecosystems in target transboundary basins, through sustainable water governance. It uses water diplomacy in order to increase the socio-economic, environmental and political benefits derived from water. Cooperation among countries in the management of transboundary waters is a building block of international security and regional stability. Likewise, water management is also a local activity as clean, safe and dependable water is intrinsic to health, food security and economic opportunities. Failing to manage water often results in poverty, disease, loss of biodiversity, conflict and instability.

The strategy of the BRIDGE project aims at catalysing sustainable water resources development, including progress on safe water supply and sanitation, sustainable watershed management and biodiversity conservation. The principle is to promote transboundary water cooperation globally through advocacy, capacity and leadership development to promote cooperation and catalyse change. On the other hand, UNECE encourages the extension of the 1992 Water Convention in order to provide a legal framework for regional cooperation on shared water resources. UNECE also promotes an integrated and inter-sectoral approach to water management at all levels and facilitates funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development while also playing a support role in the monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in target transboundary basins.

Based on these needs, this program's 5th phase operates in hot spots of three regions (Latin America, Africa and Asia):



BRIDGE advanced several of these processes into more decisive phases. In Chad, a national dialogue brought together ministries to build trust and secure formal approval to proceed with the revision of the Moundou Agreement, a key transboundary water accord. In the Mano River Basin, a regional workshop held jointly with ECOWAS validated the organisational text for a new Transboundary River Basin Management Authority, a concrete step toward stronger shared institutions in the region. In the Andes, BRIDGE advanced several parallel financing pathways to sustain transboundary cooperation, including a GEF-9 proposal for the Pilcomayo basin, a possible renewed role as Executing Agency on a Peru-Ecuador project, and a joint proposal with the World Food Programme to enhance climate resilience in shared wetlands.

Additional information:
https://www.waterandnature.org/initiatives/bridge