# Support to water cooperation based on the UNECE Water Convention

**Region**
Global

**Partners**
GEF, IUCN, INBO, WWF, OSCE, World Bank, UNCDF, AfDB, ADB, IDB, UNESCO, UNFCCC, FAO, WMO, other UN Regional Commissions, and many more.

**Background information**
The intervention aims to promote transboundary water cooperation at both technical and political levels by focusing on different aspects of transboundary water management and use.

**Project objectives**
Transboundary waters worldwide are managed in cooperation between riparian countries to promote sustainable development, peace and security.

**Beneficiaries**
Water authorities, decision-makers from various sectors and at different levels, basin organizations, NGOs and international organizations.

**Costs**
Total: USD 18'902'00
SDC: USD 2'100'00

**Contact**
Section Water
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**Duration**
2025 - 2027

**Additional Information**
www.unece.org/env/water

The Swiss contribution will support sustainable development in transboundary basins by fostering transboundary water cooperation based on the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UN Water Convention). This contribution will support the Programme of Work 2025 – 2027 of the Water Convention, in particular its pillars on capacity-building, development of policy guidance backed by pilot projects on the ground, and exchange of experience. As a result, it will strengthen the sustainable use of shared water resources globally, and promote water security, water diplomacy, respect for the rule of law and political stability.

The UNECE 1992 Water Convention is a global legal and intergovernmental framework for transboundary water cooperation. Since the 1990s, the Convention has fostered the development of transboundary agreements, the establishment of joint institutions and the strengthening of cooperation in the UNECE region. In March 2016, it turned into **a global framework open for accession by all UN Member States**.

In 2023, Panama and Iraq became the first Parties from Latin America and the Middle East, respectively. That same year, Namibia became the first country from Southern Africa to join the Convention. In 2025, Bangladesh became the first Party from South Asia. As of June 2026, the UN Water Convention has 57 state parties globally. Recent accessions include Sierra Leone, Botswana and Jordan. Over 20 additional countries are in active accession processes.

Switzerland's contribution aims to promote cooperation on transboundary waters at both technical and political levels. It represents a core contribution to the work under the Convention; thus, most activities will be co-funded by other donors. While the contribution will support the entire Programme of Work 2025 – 2027 (as an institutional programmatic contribution), priority will be given to activities in the following areas:

**Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and supporting the application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation.** Increasing the visibility of the Convention both at technical and political levels will be promoted by increasing awareness of and supporting national processes towards accession to the Convention; increasing capacity for implementation of the Convention at the national and regional levels, especially for new Parties; supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies; supporting implementation and compliance through the Implementation Committee.

**Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins.** Access to comparable information across a transboundary basin or aquifer is necessary to form a common basis for management of water resources, but this often faces significant challenges. Support will be provided to countries who wish to initiate or further develop 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 between riparian countries.

**Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development.** Fostering financial resilience is essential for sustained, cooperative management of shared water resources. This includes strengthening understanding of the need for sustainable funding for transboundary water institutions and basin development programmes. It also means promoting knowledge-sharing and peer learning on innovative financing mechanisms, while supporting national authorities and basin organizations in mobilizing funding from domestic budgets, international donors, development banks, and other sources.

