

# “Counting our Gains”

## Workshop on Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation

Sharing Experiences on their  
Identification, Assessment and Communication



## UPPER LEMPA RIVER BASIN GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR

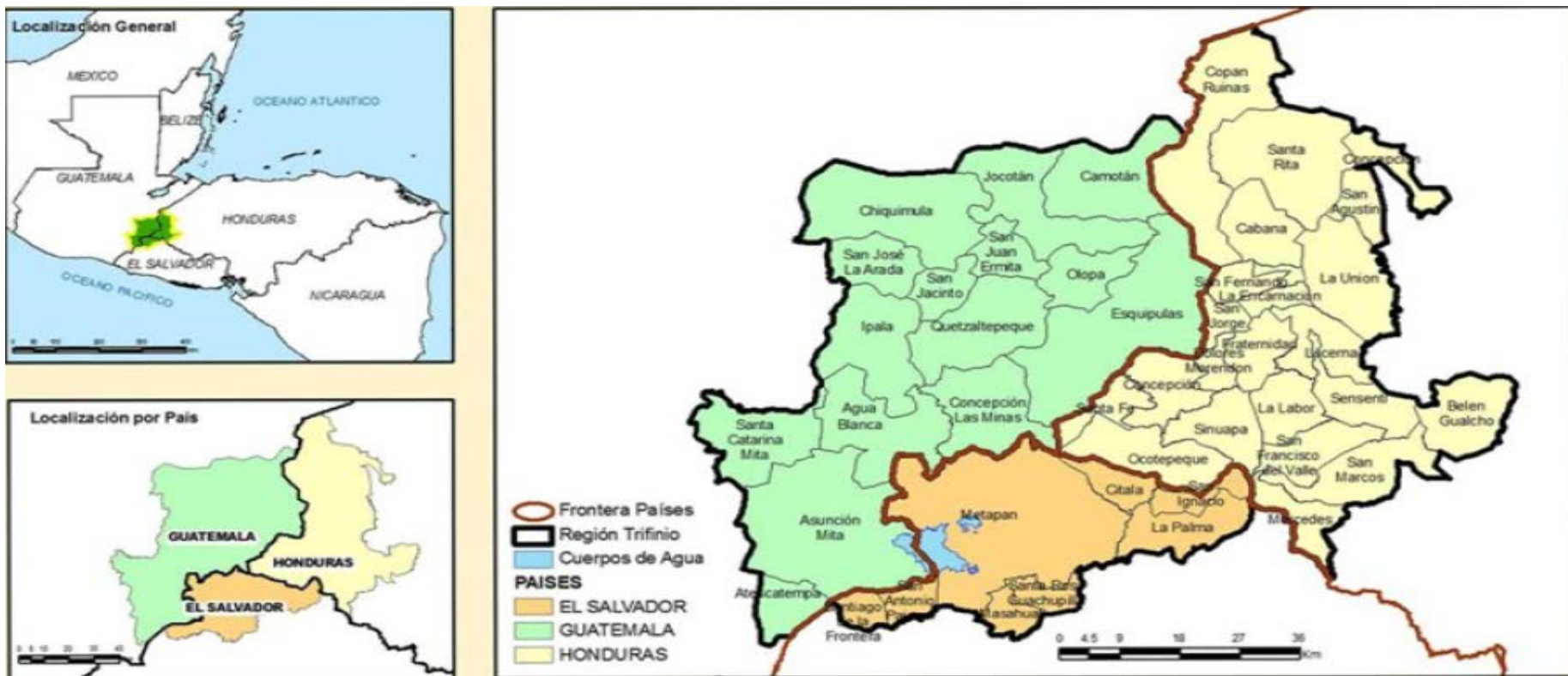
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# Context of the Transboundary Water Cooperation process.



The upper Lempa River is in the region of Trifinio in the border triangle where Guatemala , Honduras and El Salvador converge . The total area of the river basin is approximately 18,240 km<sup>2</sup> 56 % are in El Salvador ; 30 % in Honduras ; and 14% in Guatemala . The upper Lempa River , with an area of 3618.50 km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of 350.065 inhabitants

**Municipalities Map**  
**Mancomunidad Río Lempa (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras)**  
**Area Plan Trifinio**

# UPPER LEMPA RIVER BASIN

- **Establishment of 2 mechanisms institutionalized for the management of the territory. The Trifinio Plan and the Mancomunidad of municipalities of the Lempa River.**
- **The first co-ordinated by the Vice-Presidencies of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. The second, composed of around 22 municipalities.**
- **Existence of plans of management and development of the upper basin and protected natural areas, mobilization of international cooperation, establishment of agreements of cooperation and coordination at the inter-agency level of Governments and municipalities.**
- **Establishment and operation of mechanisms for consultation and participation. Promotion of innovative mechanisms of financing for investment in forests and water**





# Benefits- Transboundary Water Cooperation process

**Economic benefits within basin:** Increased forestry activity, increase in availability of water for agricultural irrigation, supply human use, productive, craft and tourism activities. Increased investment and employment through programs for the protection of natural resources

**Economic benefits beyond basin:** Hydroelectric generation. Water supply for human consumption and productive for human settlements and industrial and agro-industrial production in the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador, El Salvador



# Benefits- Transboundary Water Cooperation process

**Social benefits:** Strengthening of local authorities, local governance strengthened. Agreements and cross-border arrangements established and put in place between local actors. Increase in social investments in education, health and sanitation.

**Environmental benefits:** Restoration and protection of landscapes. Control of fires. Reducing vulnerabilities and environmental degradation. Regulation of floods. Contribution to aquifers middle and lower basin of the river Lempa.

**Geopolitical benefits:** Area of cross-border coordination and cooperation. Model transboundary management replicable for other areas of the region. Established mechanism of political dialogue at the highest level between the 3 countries.



## What information from “benefit assessments” has been communicated to decision-makers and stakeholders to support the transboundary water cooperation process?

- Practices evaluated on management and sustainable management of natural resources from **a set of studies and systematization of the experience of cross-border cooperation. Systematic appraisal of the implementation of programs and project** and its impact on the improvement of the living conditions of residents, local governance and vulnerability reduction. The experience of cross-border management of the Upper Lempa has been systematized about 10 years ago and published at least 2 times.
- **Communication strategy based on promoting concrete agreements for cooperation and coordination.** Facilitation of inter-agency arrangements for the implementation of actions, support citizen and official and social recognition of the initiative.



# What information from “benefit assessments” has been communicated to decision-makers and stakeholders to support the transboundary water cooperation process?

- Memories of Work , newsletters and program proposals and projects and initiatives presented by the Vice-Chairmen of the countries has led to particularly get support to implement actions and investments to promote sustainable development in the region.
- Finally the effort of the municipalities forming the Mancomunidad Trinacional del Río Lempa have moved decades later assessed the achievements and results of the cooperation mechanism and wanting to take a greater role to ensure the sustainability of the benefits achieved
- In practice the benefits achieved through cooperation on border management of the Upper Lempa, has led to dismantle border facilitation, trade , immigration and environmental conflicts and their success requires a much more structured strategy for dissemination among stakeholders key region.
- We believe that disclosure of the experience has been limited, there is not enough well-designed and targeted efforts to promote this type of experience.
- Unfortunately the region is required to play this form of management in several existing shared basins in the area. We need to increase new mechanisms for communication and dissemination, sharing their challenges and threats in the other countries that are in conflict processes international waters





# What are the key lessons learned and recommendations



- **The promotion of specific agreements for cooperation and coordination between governments, developing their own institutional capacity and management cooperation to mobilize national and international resources .**
  - **The political leadership at the level of vice has facilitated the realization of interagency agreements for the implementation of activities in the field of public works, agriculture, tourism, environment and local development.**
  - **The creation of mechanisms for participation and inclusion has enjoyed public support and social recognition of the initiative.**
  - **The development of a model of cooperation that transboundary basins adapted to their reality principles.**
  - **Achieving inclusive territorial governance mechanisms that have allowed and achieved social support and hence the sustainability of the actions in the territory.**
  - **The need to strengthen its outreach and dissemination strategy in the region to validate and replicate the model in shared basins presenting scenarios of tension and conflict**
- **The major challenges are:**
  - **The strengthening of institutionality publishes regional to comply and implement environmental regulations;**
  - **Effective implementation of the interinstitutional agreements between the central level and local governments;**
  - **Establishment of sustainable financial mechanisms to guarantee investments and actions planned and scheduled between the three countries**
  - **Formalize mechanisms of diffusion and socialization of the benefits and opportunities at the local level**



# UPPER LEMPA RIVER BASIN

## Key Messages

- ✓ High level political dialogue
- ✓ political commitment
- ✓ establishment of high-level agreements
- ✓ Participation Mechanisms
- ✓ Capacity Building
- ✓ Initiative of local actors
- ✓ International cooperation

