

Programme area 1: Support to
implementation and application of the
Convention

1.4 Development of a concept for a third comprehensive assessment

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11th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management
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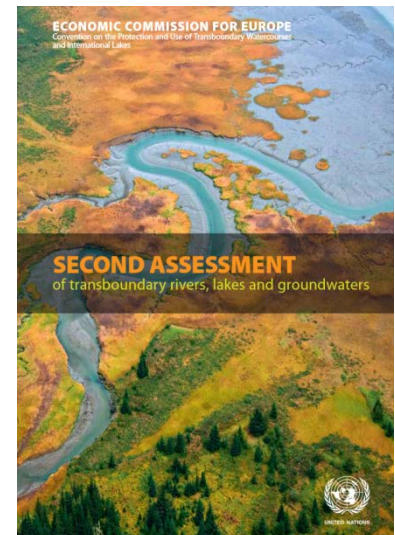
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Background to assessment under the Water Convention

- * Among the Convention's obligations: Carry out at regular intervals joint or coordinated assessments of the conditions of transboundary waters and the effectiveness of measures taken
- * In 2003 the Parties to the Water Convention decided to regularly carry out regional assessments; First Assessment in 2007, Second Assessment in 2011



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Significant achievements in this area of work

1. *M&A guidelines, pilot projects prepared helped to upgrade monitoring cooperation and information exchange practices*
2. *Overview of the status of transboundary waters in the UNECE region obtained*
 - * *More than 150 transboundary rivers, 40 lakes, some 200 transboundary groundwaters & 25 Ramsar sites or other wetlands of transboundary importance assessed in close cooperation with the national administrations.*
 - * *Capacity building: subregional workshops, exchanges & self-assessment*
 - * *Stimulates further action by different actors*
 - * *Good partnership: Ramsar, GWP-Med, IWAC, UNEP-GRID Europe, IGRAC, basin commissions, donors etc*
 - * *Identification of gaps, issues on which information is poor or lacking*
 - * *Active participation: also by non-UNECE countries*



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Lessons learned and recommendations to others

- * The **process** is as important as the final product for political and technical dialogue, capacity building & exchange of experiences
- * particularly useful for basins without agreement or joint bodies
- * **Strategic partnerships** needed, for expertise, for geographical coverage, for the participatory process
- * **Intersectoral coordination** at national level improves data availability!
- * More information available on status and pressures than on **impact and responses**
- * **Different approaches/methodologies** complicate regional assessments
- * To keep the effort manageable: **Well designed and targeted collection of information**, complementary information sources, seeking synergies with other reporting processes



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Second Assessment

- * **Approach: subregional focus** to reflect the diversity; Based on information by countries (+review and endorsement)
- * DPSIR framework – Driving forces, Pressures, Status, Impact, Responses)
- * Information included
 - * Surface and groundwater resources: **distribution** among the riparian countries within a basin/aquifer
 - * **Pressures** and their importance (water uses, polluting activities, diversion etc)
 - * **Quality and quantity status** of transboundary watercourses
 - * Transboundary **impacts**
 - * **Cooperation:** joint bodies, agreements, joint monitoring etc
 - * **Trends**
 - * **Response measures** taken



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What does a comprehensive assessment serve and help tackle?

- * Periodic check against the baseline of the 1st and 2nd Assessments to **keep the status of waters under scrutiny**; there are gaps that remain
- * Convenes the Parties, non-Parties, potential will-be Parties and others to **discuss emerging challenges and how to respond to them**. Also non-Parties can convey their issues & shape the assessment -> **supports putting in practice the opening strategy**
- * **Exchange of experience and good practices, capacity-building, harmonization, promoting cooperation, through both political and technical dialogue**
- * **Complements the reporting** under the Convention
- * The main **added value** compared to other initiatives: the focus on transboundary waters, the intergovernmental nature and the joint/participatory process (i.e. not a desk or expert study)



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The process is important , good planning is crucial

- * The **burden of information collection should be minimized**: complement official sources with supporting information
- * How far **beyond descriptive** can we go about e.g. quantity and quality status? Higher ambition requires a further harmonized approach and/or more use of global data sources (including modelled ones). Most likely the amount and quality of information will vary significantly
- * **Balance between a consistent approach and reflecting the specificities** of the sub-regions, e.g. EU-EECCA-non-UNECE -> setting a minimum common level for information
- * Seek to assess the **impact of the Convention and of cooperation**, if possible
- * **Introduce new countries to the Convention's work**, provide convening power for initiating a dialogue among riparian countries
- * **Close collaboration** with regional commissions and/or global partners is crucial
- * **Meaningful links to other processes**: reporting under the Convention, WFD/EU Directives related reporting, SDGs' monitoring', possibly UNEP/GEMS water and GEO



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Preliminary thinking for consideration by the Working Group

- * **Main components: desk study, questionnaire, workshops**
- * **Proposed scope: Selected/volunteered basins, from the UNECE region and beyond** (reflecting the globalization)
- * Approach to selection: All Parties will be invited, and all other countries are welcome subject to their interest
- * Possible modes of targeted invitations:
 1. Review of the basins from the 2nd Assessment: a priority set formed, in consultation with the countries, considering certain criteria (Expert Group to develop): e.g. size/importance/representativeness (in terms of e.g. type of waters, climate, management challenges), changes observed or occurring
 2. For regions outside UNECE:
 - potential accession countries with interest to participate -> riparian countries also to be invited
 - Basin organizations and regional organizations which have participated in the Convention's work
 - Invite regional commissions and organizations to cooperate, to consult countries in their region and to make related proposals
 3. Good examples can be highlighted, of cooperation, of measures taken



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Planned future activities in 2016-2018: Development of a concept and proposal for a process

Process

- * Small expert group to map the links to other relevant processes and the possible information sources to be considered, propose a process, and to develop a draft structure, outline and scope for discussion in the Working Group(s)
- * December 2016: **Tasks (ToR) for the Expert Group** , secretariat to develop for the Bureau's review
- * **Expert group to be formed** : ensure representation of, at least, countries (EU, EECCA, non-Party, non-UNECE), basin organizations, regional organizations, key partners; **meeting in March 2017**
- * **Consultation/guidance: July 2017**, the IWRM WG
- * Integration of comments, gap filling, enquiries with partners
- * **2018**: Meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (dormant 2013-) to be convened to review the concept and refine it
- * **Elaborated concept & process for consideration by IWRM WG & MoP in 2018**
- * **Report not before 2021** (timeline to be detailed when the related processes, resource contributions etc. more clear)



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