



**Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes**

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management

Nineteenth meeting

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment

Nineteenth meeting

Geneva, 6-8 May 2024

Item 8(b) of the provisional agenda

Source-to-sea management

**Draft outline of the guidance note for the implementation of the source-to-sea approach
in transboundary basins**

Note by the secretariat

Background

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes programme of work for 2022–2024 (ECE/MP.WAT/63/Add.1) includes, in programme area 3.1 on promoting integrated water resources management in transboundary basins, the organization of a global workshop to share good practices related to the source-to-sea approach, under the co-leadership of Estonia and Slovenia. As an outcome of the Global workshop on source-to-sea management (Geneva, 14-16 December 2022), the eighteenth meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (Geneva, 19-21 June 2023) entrusted the secretariat, together with the co-lead Parties Slovenia and Estonia, to develop a guidance note on source-to-sea management and encouraged partners to cooperate on this effort (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2023/2).

An expert group has been established in February 2024, under the leadership of the lead parties Estonia and Slovenia. The expert group met twice online.

This draft outline has been developed jointly with the group; the secretariat facilitated the process.

The guidance note is expected to integrate practical examples throughout the text. Visuals will be used to illustrate key concepts and processes more effectively.

An extended annotated outline of the guidance note will be presented at the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 23-25 October 2024). It is envisaged to launch the guidance note at the UN Ocean Conference (Nice, France, 9-13 June 2025).

The Working Groups are invited to review this draft outline and provide comments.

- Foreword
- Acknowledgements
- Contents
- Executive Summary/ Main messages

Part I Introduction: Understanding Source-to-Sea Management in Transboundary Basins

- **Source-to-Sea Management: the basics**
 - *Existing definitions and introduction of key concepts*
 - *Brief analysis on how source-to-sea relates to existing approaches (including Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), etc.)*
 - *Why is source-to-sea management important and needed (including how it addresses the triple planetary crises and advances the achievement of SDGs)*
 - *Source-to-sea management and transboundary water cooperation*
- **Scope of the Guidance Note**
- **Mandate, objectives, target audience and development process**
- **How to use this Guidance Note**

Part II Understanding Governance Dynamics in Transboundary Basin Management

- **Overview of global legal frameworks relevant to source-to-sea management in transboundary basins**
 - *UN Water Conventions; the Convention on Wetlands; Basel – Stockholm – Rotterdam Conventions; UNCLOS and BBNJ; the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment; Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and other instruments and commitments*
- **Breaking sectoral silos and promoting cross sectoral cooperation**
 - *Exploring the key gaps hindering the connection of coastal zone and basin governance and management (e.g., different ministries/agencies regulating freshwater and marine issues, institutional mandates are not connected)*
 - *Challenges of clashing interests among stakeholders (e.g., agriculture, aquaculture, industry, mining sector, cities)*
 - *Proposed strategies for effective collaboration*
- **How the source-to-sea approach can facilitate the objectives of legal frameworks**
 - *Role of transboundary water agreements and regional seas conventions*
 - *Challenges and opportunities for the source-to-sea approach to advance the objectives of legal frameworks*

- **Institutional arrangements for source-to-sea management**
 - *Challenges and opportunities for applying the source-to-sea approach to institutional cooperation mechanisms such as joint bodies for transboundary water cooperation (including basin organizations) and institutions responsible for marine environment (including Regional Seas Commissions)*
 - *Use of planning instruments (river basin management plans, coastal zone plans, sea action plans, climate change adaptation strategies, etc.), strategic environmental assessment and other tools*

Part III How the source-to-sea approach can address major pressures

- **Flows**
 - *Understanding critical role of flows for tackling coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, pollution, etc.*
- **Pollution**
 - *Understanding how source-to-sea approach can address the different sources and types of pollution, such as plastic pollution, industrial discharges, agricultural runoff, municipal wastewater etc.*
- **Addressing Biodiversity Loss and Ecosystem Degradation**
 - *Understanding how measures to protect and restore upstream habitats such as forests, wetlands, and rivers can help maintain healthy ecosystems and support diverse flora and fauna.*
- **Climate Change**
 - *Understanding how source-to-sea approach can play a role in preserving and restoring coastal habitats, implementing sustainable land-use practices upstream, and managing land-sea interactions to reduce vulnerability and promote resilience in coastal communities.*

Part IV Actionable recommendations for practitioners: Implementing the source-to-sea approach in transboundary cooperation

- **Characterize**
 - *Understanding and characterizing key flows*
- **Engage**
 - *Stakeholder engagement and empowerment*
- **Diagnose**
 - *Understanding institutions, legal and regulatory frameworks and identifying governance gaps*
- **Design**
 - *Institutional cooperation and capacity building*
- **Act**
 - *Resource mobilization and funding mechanisms*
- **Adapt**
 - *Monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management*

Part V Conclusions

- *Summary of main findings and recommendations*
 - *Emphasis on importance of collaboration, innovation, and sustained effort in implementing the source-to-sea approach*
-