

5th joint meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment under the Water Convention, 6-8 May 2024

Item 8(d)

Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context

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1. Main achievements (1)

Summary Handbook On Water Allocation (Published Dec 2023)

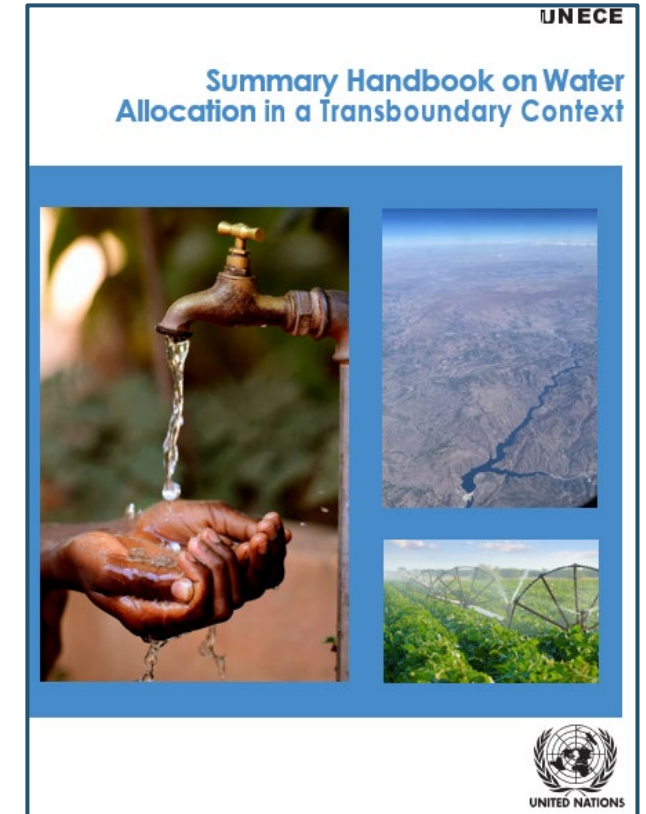
A timely update to the Handbook given the increasing prevalence of water scarcity and drought since the Handbook was adopted at MOP9

A shorter, targeted practical resource for policy / decision-makers featuring snapshot of key elements, frameworks, modalities to consider

Reference to full Handbook Case studies from different continents, regions, basins are noted under relevant sections for further reading.

New case studies highlighting emerging initiatives and practices

- CENTRAL ASIA: The WE-ACT project: a climate sensitive decision support system for water allocation in the Naryn and Kara Darya catchments of the Syr Darya river basin
- SOUTHERN AFRICA: Transboundary water allocation modelling & strategy in the revised INCOMAPTO Agreement – the CGIAR NEXUS Gains Initiative



1. Main achievements (2)

‘Workshop on Transboundary Water Allocation, WEFE Nexus & Development of Agreements & other Arrangements: Supporting exchanges of lessons learned, good practices & practical tools’ (15-16 April 2024, Zambia)

Over 60 participants: States, River/lake basin orgs, NGOs, UN, Donor agencies, including high-level opening from the Minister

Designed to support states, river basin and lake organizations, and other relevant institutions in sharing challenges, problem-solving, and exchanging good practices on water allocation agreements and other transboundary arrangements.

Focus on science-policy interface between allocation modelling, WEFE Nexus approach and developing flexible, ‘climate-proof’ and environmentally sustainable legal agreements and policies = Use of Convention Practical Guide on Agreements

Presenters and interactive group work sessions showcased up-to-date practices, novel approaches and showcased practical tools to support decision-makers, such as Convention Handbook on Allocation, Summary Handbook & Nexus Approach.

Group work “main messages” as outcomes will be applicable in Southern Africa and regions facing similar challenges such as Central Asia and Western Europe.



1. Main achievements (3)

Twinning Initiatives focus on Allocation technical exchanges

Ghana, Hungary, Zambia launched a Twinning Initiative with a focus on Water Allocation under Convention POW linked with complementary technical areas (ie monitoring & assessment)

- Planned in Budapest, Nov 2023 at Convention workshop;
- Kick-off meeting in Accra, Dec 2023 plus site visits;
- Meeting with technical exchanges in Livingstone, Apr 2024

Namibia & Finland ongoing implementation of Twinning Initiative launched in May 2023

- Meeting with technical exchanges in Livingstone, Apr 2024
- Study tour of Namibian officials to Finland in Sept 2024 will focus on water allocation, as well complementary technical areas (ie monitoring & assessment).



2. How was it achieved?

- **Recognising country/ regional needs:** Identifying where capacity-building on allocation and complementary approaches is most needed and adds most value: example of Zambia & Zimbabwe drought crises declared in 2024
- **Connecting inter-regional exchanges:** regions such as Central Asia and Southern Africa are different contexts yet face many similar challenges related to equitable and sustainable water management in face of water scarcity and pollution issues. Can connect such regions for valuable exchanges via Convention activities eg workshops
- **Strong partnerships:** Establishing strong partnerships with countries and organisations in regions that are directly impacted by water issues necessitating enhanced capacity on transboundary water allocation. Partners can help direct Convention to novel approaches, new tools, upcoming needs/trends and also support key activities
- **Harnessing synergies:** identifying complementary Convention Programme of Work Areas and designing activities that seek to harness these synergies to be suited for the particular regional/basin/country context ie Workshop on Water Allocation, WEFE Nexus and Developing Agreements that combined 3 different Programme of Work areas
- **Utilising Convention tools:** Allocation Handbook and Summary Handbook now provide a comprehensive tool kit for decision-makers involved in transboundary allocation; also aim to harness complementary tools in support ie Practical Guide on Developing Agreements & other Arrangements

3. Challenges and lessons learned

- Extreme water stress is forcing countries, RBOs to urgently seek practical solutions to common challenges: Convention can add value e.g water allocation, WEFE nexus and developing agreements.
- Topic remains a **highly sensitive topic in many regions**
- **Exchanges of experiences, within and between different regions, vital to build trust and capacity**
- **Groundwater continues to be missing** from many transboundary allocation planning processes
- As water scarcity increases under pressures of climate change, **allocation will rise higher on the water and political agenda of countries**
- Water allocation, like transboundary cooperation, **relies on long-term trust and capacity-building.**
- Build capacity to **move beyond perceptions of allocation as fixed quantitative amounts.**
- Need to **highlight broader holistic approaches (such as IWRM, WEFE nexus)**
- **Groundwater needs to have increased visibility** for effective conjunctive management of surface and groundwater via allocation in basins.
- **New, exciting projects are piloting innovative systems, models** and emerging technologies; they should be monitored, **showcased and supported where possible**

4. Proposed future activities for 2025-2027

- **Lead Parties:** Finland, Hungary and Namibia (to be confirmed).
- **Objective:** Raise capacity on development of equitable and sustainable transboundary arrangements on water allocation based on increased understanding and knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of water allocation in transboundary basins and aquifers, including mechanisms, tools and practices.

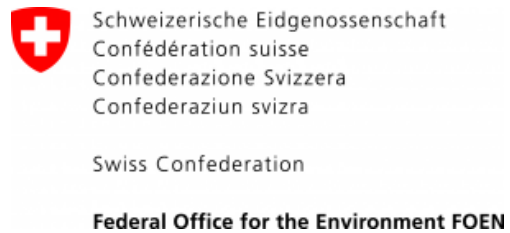
ACTIVITIES

- **Up to two regional, basin or bilateral workshops or workshop sessions** on transboundary water allocation and complementary approaches will be organized to build capacity and **promote use of the Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context and its Summary Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context.**
- The workshops, which will be combined with other workshops, will aim to provide participants with tools and approaches to help address and reconcile sectoral water demands through an integrated approach to transboundary water allocation, water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus and related topics, as needed.
- **Practical synergies and linkages between national and transboundary allocation approaches will be promoted** in workshops or sessions with countries and organizations involved in national water allocation activities.
- **Synergies:** with areas 1.3 and 3.2.
- **Resource requirements:** \$230,000.

5. Partners and Donors



Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland



Thank you!

(please include your contact information)



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RESOURCES:
www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html

<https://unece.org/environment-policy/water/areas-work-convention/water-allocation-transboundary-context>

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