



Ministry of Agriculture of
the Republic of
Kazakhstan



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High-Level Workshop: Financing Transboundary Basin Development

9 October 2018

Astana, Kazakhstan

INFORMATION NOTE

I. Background and objectives

More than forty percent of the world population lives in transboundary basins. Transboundary waters create socio-economic, environmental and political inter-dependencies. Therefore, transboundary water cooperation is crucial for sustainable development and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as for peace and stability.

All around the world, a common challenge faced by countries that share transboundary waters is the financing and implementation of coordinated basin development. River basin organisations and other joint bodies established to manage transboundary waters require sufficient and reliable financial resources to operate effectively, and all measures that have been identified cooperatively require financing regardless of who will be implementing them.

Funding can stem from different sources. It can be generated by river basin organisations (through levies and services fees, such as those imposed on the licensing or operation of infrastructure, for navigational uses, or fishing operations), contributed by member countries from national budgets (using equal-sharing or key-based formulas), and contributed by external parties on an interim basis (through multilateral development banks e.g. for large infrastructure, official development assistance,

climate and other vertical funds, private sector engagement, or donations). Experiences vary from country to country and basin to basin, but there have been few opportunities to discuss them, particularly at high level.

It is critical that tailored sustainable funding models spelling out the role of each of those funding sources are defined for each transboundary basin. The definition of such sustainable funding models is ultimately the responsibility of the cooperating countries. Water Ministers have a key role to play in leading the definition of sustainable funding models and rallying key domestic and external players around them. An intersectoral approach will be needed as user sectors (energy, navigation, fisheries) are encouraged to contribute funding. And since transboundary river basin organisations contribute to regional economic development, regional organizations should also be involved.

The Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace has dedicated an entire chapter to recommendations on financial innovation for transboundary water cooperation. In addition, a number of discussions related to the financing of transboundary basin development are starting to take place in different platforms, such as the roundtable on financing water by the World Water Council, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Netherlands; the Global Environment Facility's international waters window; and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The latter includes in its draft work programme for 2019-2021 a programme area on financing transboundary water cooperation.

However, there is still a lack of knowledge among many countries about sustainable funding models, existing international funding options and related procedures, but also about methods and approaches for prioritizing and securing funding for transboundary cooperation from the national budget. A high-level workshop on financing transboundary basin development will therefore be organized on 9 October 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan, back-to-back with the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (10-12 October, Kazakhstan).

II. Objectives and expected outcomes

The main objective of the high-level workshop will be to enhance the capacity of Ministers and other High-Level officials in financing transboundary water cooperation and transboundary basin development. In particular, the workshop aims:

1. To raise awareness on the importance of enhancing the financial sustainability of transboundary water management institutions and implementation programmes;
2. To facilitate knowledge sharing and peer learning among Water Ministers and other High-Level officials on options to enhance the financial sustainability of transboundary basin development;
3. To provide Ministers and other High-Level officials with access to state-of-the-art knowledge on how to mobilise funding for transboundary basin development, including on preparation of investment plans and financing strategies;
4. To promote exchange of experience on how to raise funds from national, regional and international sources for transboundary basin development, including innovative mechanisms.

The outcomes of the High-Level Workshop will be reflected in a Co-Chairs Summary and presented in the High-Level segment of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (10-12 October), at the

GEF 8th International Waters Conference (Marrakech, 5-9 November 2018), and at other relevant international events.

Furthermore, the outcomes of the High-Level workshop will influence the design of the related activities under the Water Convention, as well as other relevant activities carried out by the workshop's organisers.

III. Organization of work and topics to be discussed

The workshop will be organized on **9 October 2018**, from 2.00 p.m. to 6.15 p.m. The workshop will consist of a combination of Ministerial roundtables, group and plenary discussions.

The Ministerial roundtables and group discussions will explore:

- The different financing sources for transboundary basin development, including national sources, international funding sources, private sources through concrete examples from basins around the world
- How to match financing resources to financing needs, such as the financing of information, institutions and infrastructure in transboundary basins, including good practices and lessons learned
- How to move to a more sustainable financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development and how this issue should be taken forward in international processes

A detailed programme will be issued in September 2018.

Working languages will be English, French, Russian and Spanish.

IV. Participants

The workshop is addressed to Ministers or other high-level officials (State Secretary, Permanent Secretary, Director-General) of countries sharing transboundary water resources, from developed and developing countries. Some representatives from river basin organizations, bilateral development cooperation agencies, regional development banks and climate funds will also be invited to participate.

The target number of participants is up to 30 high-level participants.

Only high-level participants will be accepted. Participants are invited to attend also the Meeting of the Parties and in particular the high-level segment on 10 October from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. The latter will explore how to share waters in the context of growing water scarcity, the relevant impacts on development, peace and stability and how the Convention can promote reasonable, equitable and sustainable water allocation and benefit sharing.

V. Organizers

The workshop will be co-organized by the Asian Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, the Global Environment Facility International Waters Learning Exchange and Resources Network (GEF IW:LEARN), Kazakhstan (Ministry of Agriculture), the Netherlands (Ministry of Environment and Infrastructure), Switzerland (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), UNECE-Secretariat of the Water Convention and the World Bank.

VI. Practical information

The workshop will be held in, Astana, Kazakhstan.

High-level participants interested in attending the meeting are requested to register by 15 August 2018 using the following link: <https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=dolpK4>.

The secretariat will send confirmations by 30 August.

Eligible high-level participants from countries with economies in transition and developing countries may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the workshop and the Meeting of the Parties. On demand, the secretariat can provide the financial support request form. Please write to: Mayola.lidome@un.org

The nomination/ financial support form should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat at the following email address: Mayola.lidome@un.org by **15 August 2018**. **No application will be accepted after this deadline.**

In case of difficulties, comments or questions, please contact the secretariat by e-mail: Mayola.lidome@un.org; sonja.koeppel@un.org; guerrierd@un.org

Further information, practical information and relevant materials will be made available on the following meeting webpage in due course: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=49023>

More information on practical issues, visa requirements and the eighth Meeting of the Parties and its high-level segment are available at: <https://www.unece.org/env/water/mop8.html>