

# How to overcome uncertainty in transboundary basins? the UNECE Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change

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

## Double uncertainty: climate change / transboundary cooperation

- Uncertainty regarding climate change impacts: common work on scenarios and models helps to better assess climate change impacts
- Uncertainty regarding actions of the riparian countries: cooperation and consultation helps to reduce it



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## Why transboundary cooperation in adaptation?

- Prevent negative impacts of unilateral adaptation measures in riparian countries, thereby preventing potential conflict
  - Enable more effective and efficient adaptation through
    - Wider knowledge base
    - Larger planning space: take measures in the basin where they have optimum effect
    - Possibility to share costs and benefits
- => Cooperation reduces uncertainty and costs!



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## The Water Convention

In force since 1996

### Objectives:

- Protection of transboundary waters by preventing transboundary impacts
- Ecologically sound and rational management
- Reasonable and equitable use ⇒ Conflict prevention
- Conservation and restoration of ecosystems



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## Convention's legal basis for adaptation

### Parties shall

- Prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts including those related to adaptation to or mitigation measures
- Use waters in a reasonable and equitable way
- Cooperate on the basis of equality and reciprocity
- Set joint water quality objectives, exchange information, follow the precautionary principle, develop joint monitoring and common research, early warning, assist each other
- Cooperate through joint bodies



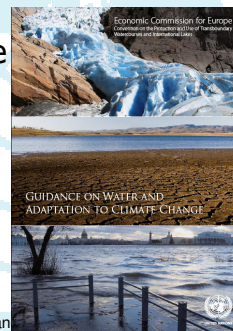
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## Objectives of the guidance

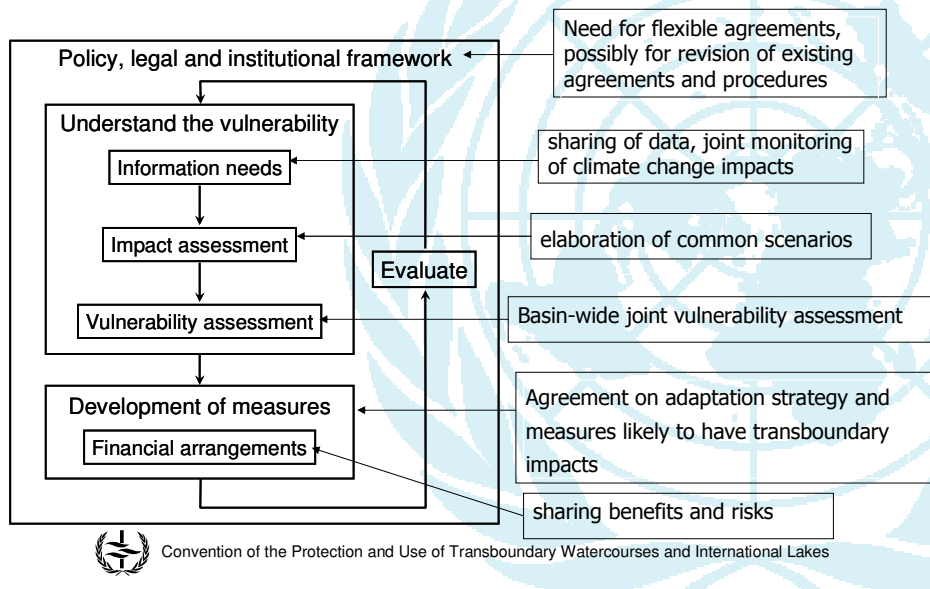
- General roadmap towards adaptation of water management to climate change, targeted at decision makers and water managers
- needs to be tailored to specific local situations
- Step-wise approach
  - Assess impacts of climate change
  - Develop policy, strategic and operational responses
- Transboundary and health focus



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## Cooperation needs in every step of developing an adaptation strategy



## Implementation of the Guidance

- Adopted at MOP5 in Nov 2009
- Programme of pilot projects on adaptation in transboundary basins in EECCA and SEE
  - focus mainly on developing adaptation strategy
  - Specific focus to be defined by countries; some focus on water scarcity, others on floods
- Platform for exchanging experiences
  - Regular workshops
  - Internet platform to be created



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## Objectives of the pilot projects programme

- Programme of pilot projects on adaptation in transboundary basins
  - Eastern Europe: Dniester basin (Ukraine, Moldova) => flood risk management
  - Neman (Belarus, Lithuania, Russian Federation) => IWRM and adaptation
  - Central Asia: Chu Talas Basin (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) => water scarcity
  - South-Eastern Europe: Sava River basin (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia) => flood risk management
  - Asia: Amur River Basin – Dauria Biosphere (Russia – China – Mongolia) => ecosystems and environmental flows
- Platform for exchanging experiences



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The Guidance is available in English, Russian and soon in French at:

[www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub74.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub74.htm)

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