



## **Water Governance Initiative**

### **Basin governance Workshop**

#### **Key messages and Draft principles on Basin Governance**

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## KEY MESSAGES ON BASIN GOVERNANCE

### **The Problem we face**

Surface and ground waters have to be managed according to hydrological boundaries, that is to say, based on river or lake basin units or aquifer system basins, while taking into account also political and administrative boundaries. Mismatches between these boundaries need to be reconciled within a system of multilevel basin governance.

That is particularly true and crucial for the transboundary waters, shared by several riparian countries, which finally use and impact the same basin water resource(s).

To be efficient, this basin management (transboundary and national river, lake, aquifer) has to be carried on by a governing framework of regional arrangements, treaties, laws, rules, management plans or other water allocation agreements, at transboundary scale or national level. This governing framework must facilitate with specific basin institutions and if possible stakeholder participation the development of a basin strategy, long term basin management arrangements and action programs, using financial instruments and water information system. In the particular case of transboundary basins, these institutions have to facilitate also the cooperation among the riparian countries, the emergence and the implementation of common strategy addressing both water uses and water protection, from upstream to downstream.

According to the context, the basin organisations can take various forms, but the more important thing is to get well-defined organizations, roles and responsibilities , with clear mandates, and sufficient human and financial resources to ensure effective water resource management at basin level and to facilitate the implementation of concerted water policy.

### ***A lack of basin organizations and weakness of many existing basin institutions***

Today, on 276 transboundary river and lake basins, and 274 transboundary aquifers in the world, the number of qualified transboundary basin organisations ensuring the water shared management is still very low.

Again, at country scale the basin management approach is too often not well developed; when basin management exists, there are in some countries deficiencies in the organization, in governance, in the resources allocated and shortfalls in means and capacities.

Moreover, many times, the basin organizations (whatever their form) have difficulties to put in place critical tools such as water information system, sustainable financial system, and to find the way for a real integrated water resource management, including a system for managing together surface and ground waters.

In addition, there is a crucial and urgent need of indicators to measure the quality of the water governance in the basin organizations, both transboundary and national.

These requirements appear more and more important as we move forward to the inevitable climate change in the world and that its impacts are more accurate.

### **Towards a Solution:**

#### **The solution are going through four actions:**

1. development of a governing frameworks of treaties, regional agreements laws, rules, management plans or other water allocation arrangements as instruments for water governance,
2. increasing of the number of countries with water security diagnoses and governance tools, based on existing (local, basin, national, international) regulatory and legislative frameworks and IRBM mechanisms,
3. increasing the number of institutions within the transboundary basins or aquifer systems capable of ensuring sustainable management of water resources,
4. development of appropriate indicators of water governance at basin scale.

### **DRAFT PRINCIPLES OF BASIN GOVERNANCE**

1. A legislative framework identifying clearly the mandate for the basin governing institutions and consistent with the national policy(ies)
2. A process for developing and implementing long term multilevel basin management arrangements that take account of the opportunities for conjunctive water management and the impacts of surface water and groundwater use on other resources and the environment.
3. Well established and coordinated Basin Organisations, based on a strong national political willingness in the riparian countries (transboundary basins)
4. A technical body or bodies with enough means (staff, finance, capacities, autonomy) and good efficiency
5. A sustainable system for financing the water management at basin level, based on key principles such as water pays water, user pays, polluter pays
6. An efficient water information system, established at basin level and a monitoring system to measure progress

7. A basin committee/commission with an official participation of representatives of all stakeholders, with transparent elections and processes , and with a good capacity
8. A legislative framework identifying clearly the mandate for the basin governing institutions and consistent with the national policy(ies)
9. A process for developing and implementing long term multilevel basin management arrangements that take account of the opportunities for conjunctive water management and the impacts of surface water and groundwater use on other resources and the environment.
10. Effective means of coordination between multilevel institutions and organizations.
11. Reliable monitoring and reporting mechanisms
12. A communication system towards the civil society