

PRIORITY for ACTION: 1.5. Contribute to cooperation and peace

Target 4: By 20XX, increase the number of institutions within transboundary basins and/or aquifer systems capable of ensuring sustainable management of water resources

Target Rationale

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.

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.

To be efficient, this basin management (transboundary river, lake, aquifer) has to be carried on by a specific institution, or transboundary basin organization, which must facilitate the cooperation among the riparian countries, the emergence and the implementation of common strategy addressing both water uses and water protection, the joint elaboration and implementation of long term management plans.

According to the context, the basin organisations can take various forms, such as international basin commission, basin or district authority with a broad mandate given by the governments. The important thing is to get a clearly identified entity, including a secretariat with enough staff and finance means for ensuring the coordination between the riparian countries and to facilitate the implementation of concerted water policy. It is clear that institutions, whatever their form, are key to the successful and long-term cooperation.

Today, on 286 transboundary river and lake basins, and 274 transboundary aquifers, the number of qualified transboundary basin organisations ensuring the water shared management is still very low.

Therefore, the setting up of transboundary basin organisations becomes a priority for making progress in water cooperation, reduction of conflicts linked to water resource, facilitating a concerted approach on the water uses, and the sharing of benefit resulting from an integrated water resource management at transboundary scale.

Target Description

The target is as following: By 20XX, increase the number of institutions within transboundary basins and/or aquifer systems capable of ensuring sustainable management of water resources

The ministerial statement of the Istanbul WWF 5 emphasise the need for the riparian States to take « the appropriate, tangible and concrete measures to improve and promote cooperation on sustainable use and protection of transboundary water resources through coordinated actions, in conformity with

existing agreements. (...). The States will work to strengthen existing institutions and develop new ones ...»".

Where a Transboundary Basin Organisation exists, it will be necessary to define the means, and the conditions to realise the relevant strengthening and to get a qualified Transboundary Basin Organisation, capable to ensure its management mission and mandate (road map of basin organisation).

In particular, most of the existing institutions in charge of river / lake basin management need to enhance their capacity and improve their expertise to study, assess and manage groundwater resources, in order to be able to expand their mandate to the groundwater resource. Indeed, where surface and groundwater resources are used together, they should be managed conjunctively. According to the context, the management of transboundary aquifers should be incorporated into existing hydrological transboundary institutions or done by specific transboundary aquifer institutions, with coordination mechanisms between both types of institutions.

Where any institution exists at basin level, initiatives for intensive dialogue among all riparian countries have to be developed and supported for confidence building and mutual understanding of issues, accompanied with capacity development activities at the level of the most concerned authorities. It will be necessary to identify the basins where a political will exists between the riparian countries to cooperate and to build a step by step work.

In the specific case of transboundary aquifers which are not directly linked to surface water or related to an international river basin, principally the deeper confined ones, the setting up of specific aquifer institutions should be considered by the riparian countries to develop a common groundwater management.

The transboundary basin organisation development has to be based on the known experiences around the world, through which tools and concrete solutions must be identified.