

# Nexus and transboundary cooperation. Conceptual framework and experience under the Water Convention.

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# UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development



# The Water Convention (UNECE) and nexus



Convention  
on the Protection and Use of  
Transboundary Watercourses  
and International Lakes  
as amended  
along with decision VI/7 clarifying the accession procedure

Convention  
sur la protection et l'utilisation  
des cours d'eau transfrontières  
et des lacs internationaux  
telles qu'adoptées  
ainsi que la décision VI/7 clarifiant la procédure d'adhésion



Support to transboundary water cooperation thanks to:

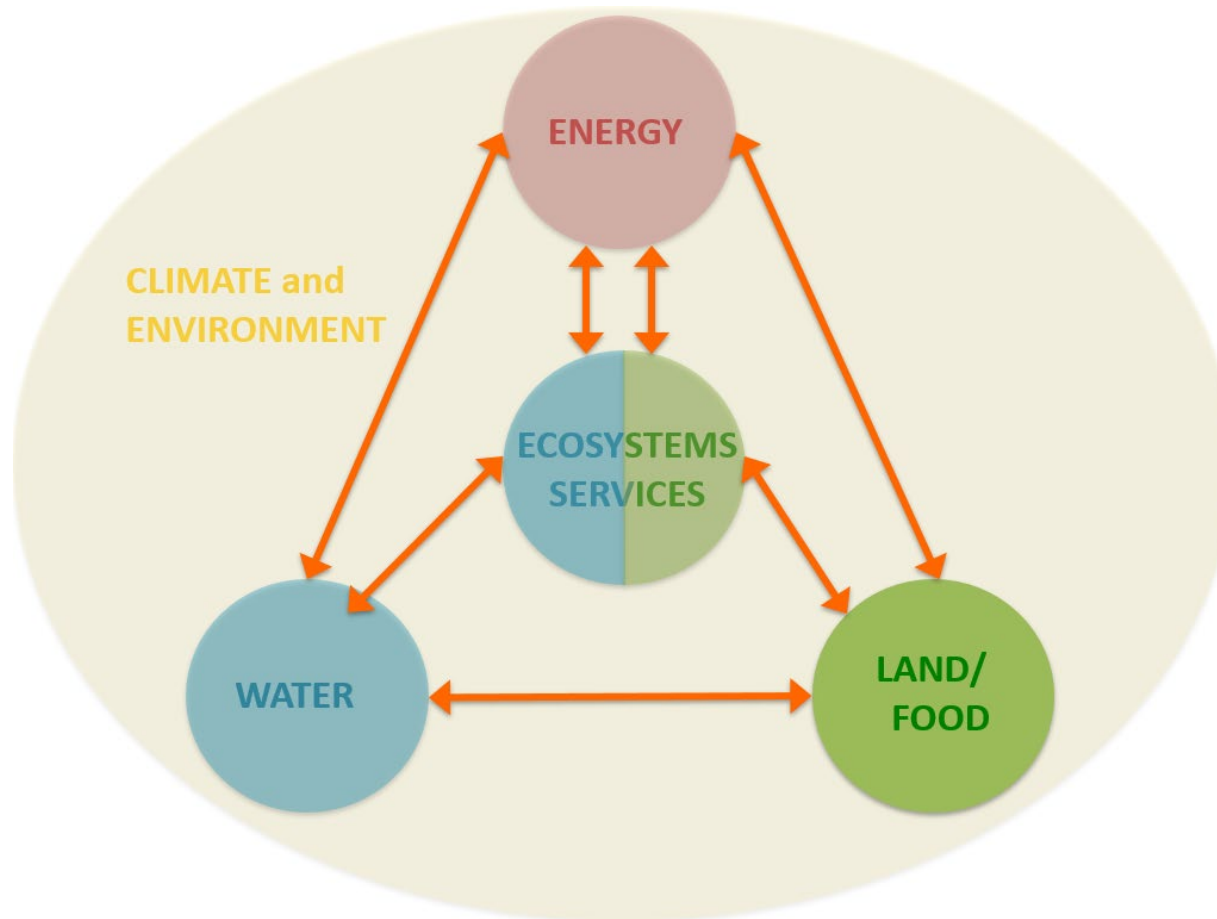
- A sound legal framework
- An active institutional framework
- Activities and projects on the ground

Global reach:

Adopted as 1992, entered into force 1996, in UNECE region, amended in 2003 to allow access to all UN member states, in 2016 effective global opening.

**Cross-sectoral trade-offs, impacts, and synergies** (Nexus) are common in transboundary contexts.

# WEFE – natural resources and basic needs



# WEFE – theory and practice

**Water, energy, and food security are *interlinked*** and without coordination sectors will compete with each other on the use of (common, finite) resources.

Increasingly so, given **trends of climate change, population growth, changing diets**, etc.

Human activities need **healthy ecosystems**, but these are increasingly under threat.

The nexus approach for WEF(E) Security is based on **three principles** (initial conceptualization (Hoff, 2011)):

1. Investing to sustain ecosystem services
2. Creating more with less
3. Accelerating access, integrating the poorest

## **FAQs:**

- Is this a new concept?
- How is it useful?
- **How does it translate in practice?**

# the Transboundary Basin Nexus Assessment

Carried out under the Water Convention (4 assessments completed , 2 ongoing;; using ad-hoc methodology)

Objective: To **foster transboundary cooperation** by:

Identifying *intersectoral synergies*;

Determining *policy measures and actions* that could alleviate tensions;

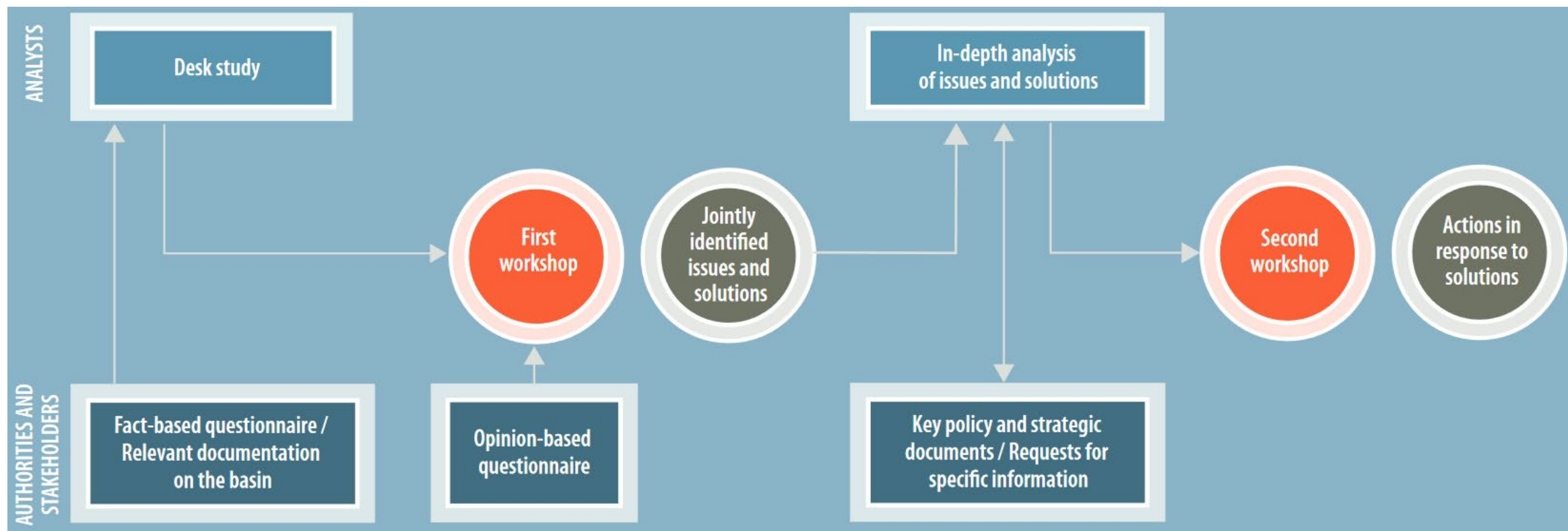
Assisting countries to *optimize* their use of resources

Assessment of **intersectoral links, trade-offs and benefits** (looking at resource base, resource uses, governance...)

**Participatory process**: Assessment prepared in close cooperation with national administrations (capacity building); governance assessment informs about the key actors; analysis focuses on jointly identified issues

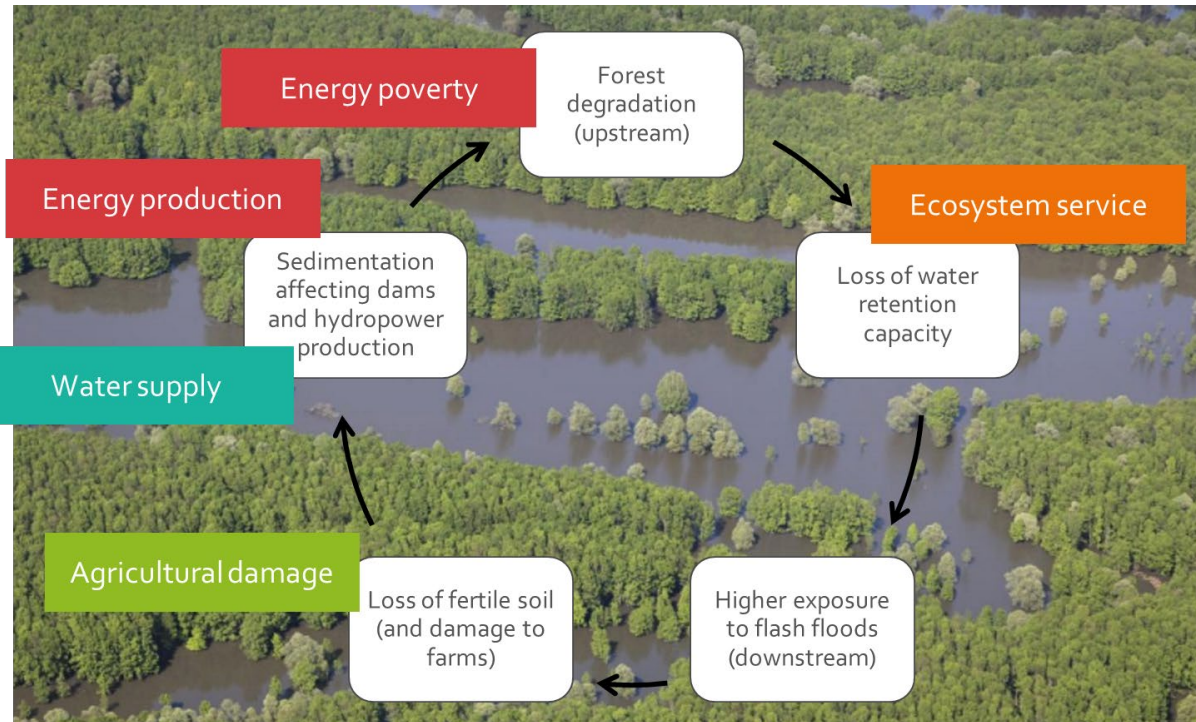


# Participatory assessment process



Working closely with existing transboundary cooperation frameworks or supporting the establishment of new ones.

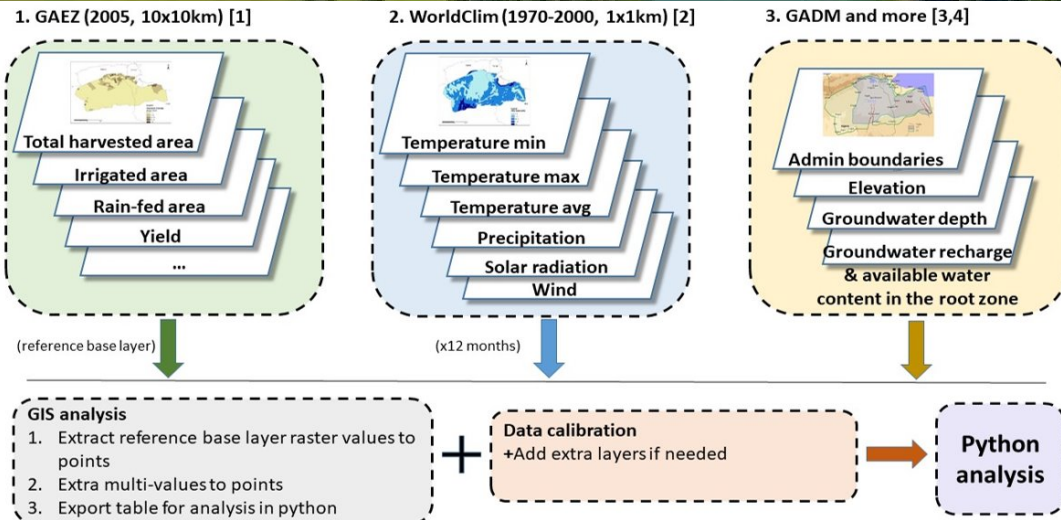
# Transboundary nexus dialogue





**What has  
worked?**

# 1: Using a flexible assessment methodology



Relevant boundaries and scales  
(geographical/physical, governance)

Existing legal, institutional frameworks  
and past experiences

Existing models, data available/data  
gaps

Existing strategies, policies, action plans  
and programs

Most pressing WEFE links? (multiple  
views)

Other projects promoting cooperation  
(possible synergies?)

## 2: Ensuring continuation, allowing evolution of dialogue

Sava assessment (2014-2015)

Drina assessment (2016-2017)

Drina follow-up project (2018-2019)

Drina Phase II (2020-2021)



**Stakeholder activity/lead,  
involvement of energy and financing  
institutions, partnership, resource  
mobilization, impact**

Drina Nexus  
Strategy/  
Road Map

political  
commitment  
to cooperate  
on & act upon  
WEFE issues in  
the basin

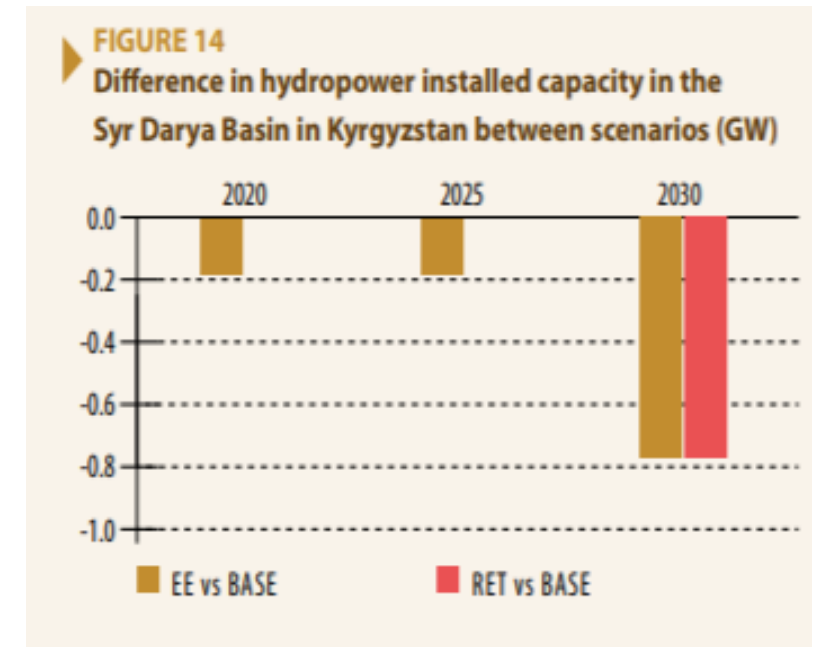
Example: Nexus activities in Western Balkans (Sava and Drina River Basins)

# 3: Identifying, quantifying, benefits of cooperation

	Benefits for economic activities	Benefits beyond economic activities
From improved water management	<b>Economic benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Expanded activity and productivity in economic sectors (agriculture, energy generation, nature-based tourism)</li> <li>•Reduced cost of carrying out productive activities</li> <li>•Reduced economic impacts of water-related hazards (floods, droughts) ...</li> </ul>	<b>Social and environmental benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Health impacts from improved water quality</li> <li>•Employment and reduced poverty impacts</li> <li>•Improved access to services (electricity, water supply..)</li> <li>•Preservation of cultural resources or recreational opportunities.</li> <li>•Increased ecological integrity</li> </ul>
From enhanced trust	<b>Regional economic cooperation benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Development of regional markets (for goods, services &amp; labour)</li> <li>•Increase in cross-border investments</li> <li>•Development transnational infrastructure networks</li> </ul>	<b>Peace and security benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Strengthening of international law</li> <li>•Increased geopolitical stability</li> <li>•New opportunities from increased trust</li> <li>•Reduced risk and avoided cost of conflict</li> <li>•Creation of shared basin identity</li> </ul>

Source: Policy Guidance Note on identifying, assessing and communicating the benefits of transboundary water cooperation, (UNECE, 2015)

This helps finding solutions and investments (no benefits: no action)



Source: Reconciling resource uses in transboundary basins: assessment of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in the Syr Darya River Basin (UNECE, 2015)



**Beyond the  
assessments**

# Nexus activities under the Water Convention

Strong **capacity building**, promoting practical addressing of the **transboundary nexus**

- ✓ 6 meetings of the **WEFE Nexus Task Force**, 1 global stocktaking workshop (2016)

Promotion of the application of a nexus approach to...

- ✓ **renewable energy** planning
- ✓ **climate** mitigation & adaptation
- ✓ **financing** cooperation and projects

-> Synthesis publications:

- **Methodology** for assessing the WEFE nexus in transboundary basins and experiences from its application: synthesis(UNECE, 2018)
- **Solutions and investments** in the WEFE nexus: a synthesis of experiences in transboundary basins (UNECE, 2021, upcoming)

-> Ad-hoc **questionnaire** to gather nexus solutions, and a framework to analyse responses (it can be used!)



# Water Convention engagement with WEEF Nexus work in South Asia to date

South Asia Transboundary  
Rivers: Regional  
Webinar (9 Nov 2020)

TOPIC SESSION 1) Water-  
Food-Energy-Ecosystem  
Nexus approach  
(upstream and  
downstream benefits)

VIDEO:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQUs\\_rQzuY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQUs_rQzuY&feature=youtu.be)



**Applicability of  
nexus in HKH?**

**Looking  
forward to  
discussion!**



# Thank you – & join the discussion!

[www.unece.org/MOP9\\_Water\\_Convention](http://www.unece.org/MOP9_Water_Convention)  
(registration by 10 September 2021)

[water.convention@un.org](mailto:water.convention@un.org)

[https://twitter.com/UNECE\\_Water](https://twitter.com/UNECE_Water) (#MOP9)



27 - 28 Sept: side events  
29 Sept: High-level Segment  
29 Sept – 1 Oct: General segment

ICIMOD

