



FOSTERING COOPERATION ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS

Success stories from SDC's
Global Programme Water

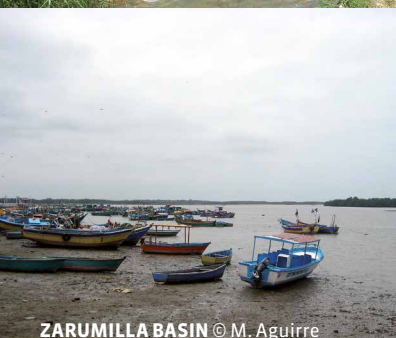
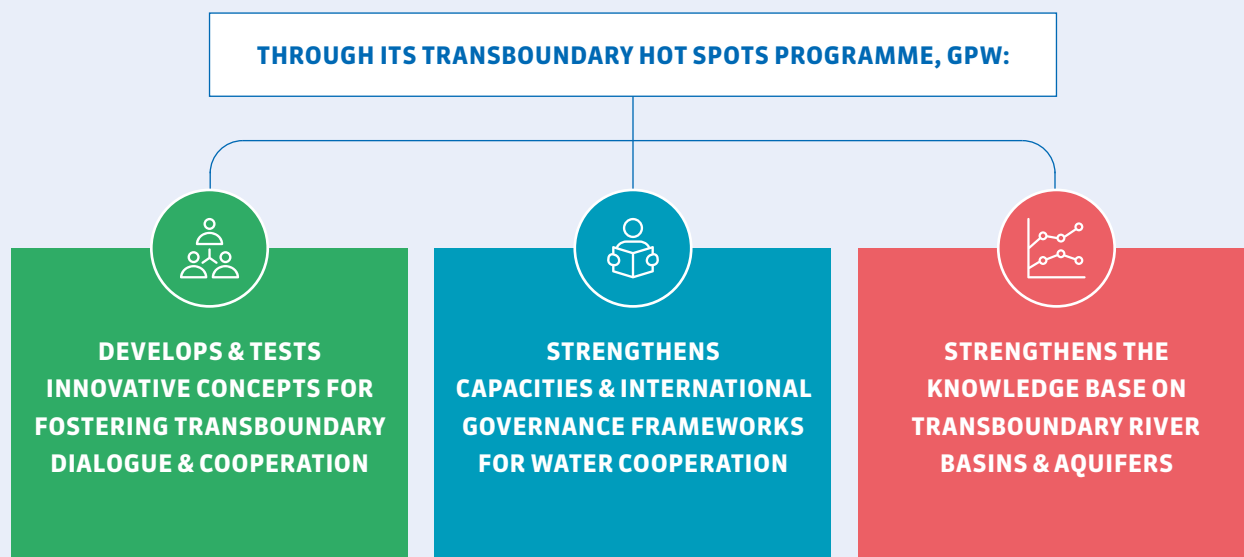


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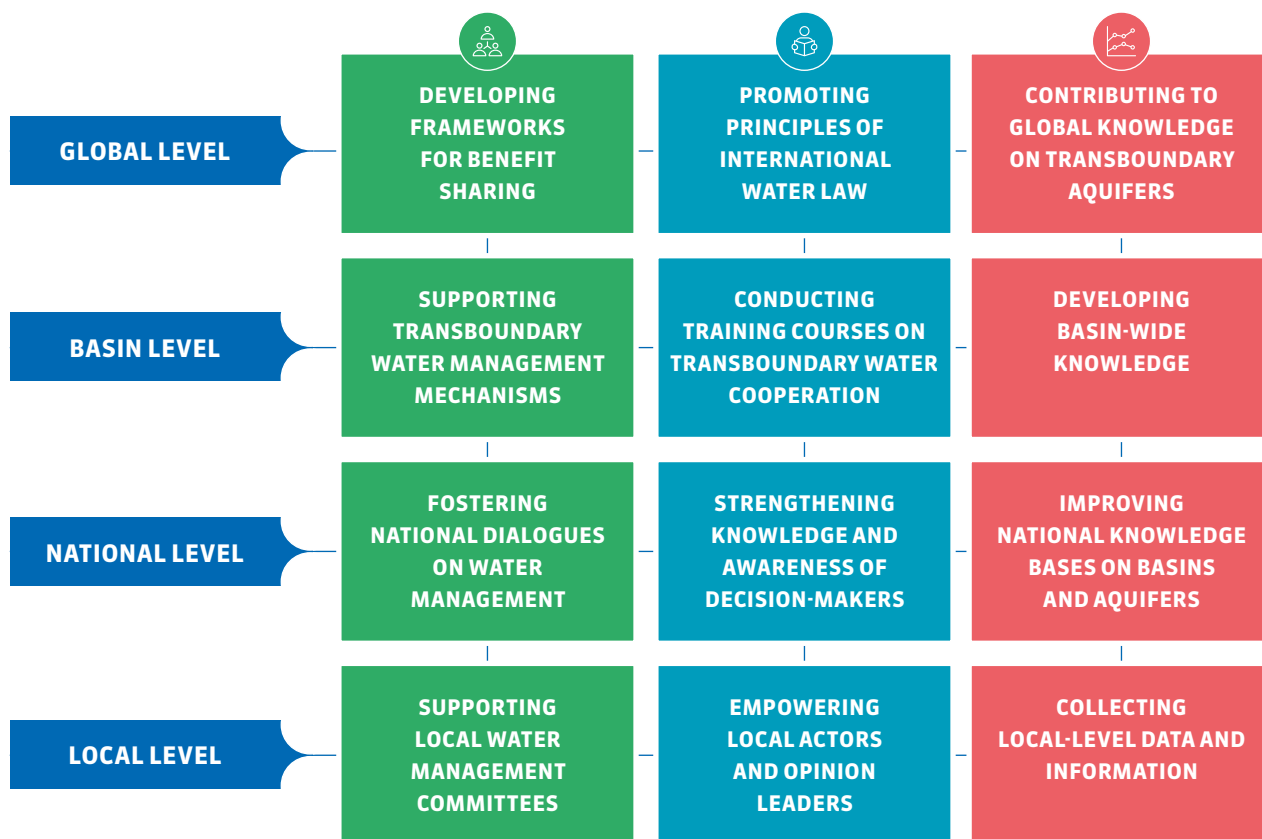
Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

WATER DIPLOMACY AND GOVERNANCE IN KEY TRANSBOUNDARY HOT SPOTS

Wherever water resources are shared, conflicts might arise between the users that depend upon that water. When rivers, lakes, and aquifers cross national borders, these conflicts could threaten national and international security. Countries working together to manage transboundary water resources thus forms an essential building block of global and regional stability. The »Water Diplomacy and Governance in Key Transboundary Hot Spots« programme, which was established in 2011 by SDC's Global Programme Water (GPW), seeks to foster cooperation among countries and communities that share water resources. With the support of GPW's Transboundary Hot Spots programme, four implementing partners conduct a wide range of activities that address transboundary cooperation at multiple levels in more than 15 river basins and aquifers around the world. In addition, the programme supports initiatives to strengthen legal frameworks and capacities for water cooperation at the global level. All implementing partners are working together to ensure a coherent multi-level approach.



A MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH TO TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION



LESSONS LEARNED

There is no »one-size-fits-all« solution: Each transboundary river or aquifer basin is different and needs a basin-specific approach to design and implement successful interventions.	Technical cooperation—such as developing a shared knowledge base—does not automatically translate into political cooperation, but must be combined with efforts to build trust and foster dialogue.
Multi-level approaches give implementers the flexibility to choose the most appropriate entry points for fostering transboundary water cooperation.	The process of collecting and interpreting data and information must be carefully designed to ensure that the knowledge it produces is accepted and used by decision-makers.



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND SUCCESS STORIES



INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES TO FOSTERING TRANSBOUNDARY DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

Using an innovative multi-level approach, IUCN established and empowered networks of committed, politically well-connected people at the municipal and provincial levels in more than ten basins around the world. These networks of champions advocate for water cooperation and help foster formal, high-level political processes.

The UNECE Water Convention has developed a conceptual framework for identifying and assessing the economic, environmental, and political benefits of cooperation that can serve as a powerful tool for launching and sustaining transboundary dialogue.



GREATER CAPACITIES AND STRONGER INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS FOR WATER COOPERATION

IUCN and UNESCO have strengthened the capacities of approximately 2,000 participants through more than 90 training courses and other educational activities on topics such as transboundary water management institutions, sharing benefits, principles of international water law, and negotiating transboundary agreements.

At the global level, the UNECE Water Convention promoted the adoption of international water law principles and provided guidance on transboundary water cooperation. More than 110 countries have participated in the Convention's activities.



STRONGER KNOWLEDGE BASE TO SUPPORT DIALOGUE AND DECISION-MAKING ON TRANSBOUNDARY RIVER BASINS AND AQUIFERS

UNESCO collected new data on transboundary aquifers in Southern Africa, Central America, and Central Asia, which will provide an important foundation for transboundary dialogue. Using this new data, the Trilateral Commission for the tri-border region connecting El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras engaged national authorities to advocate for improving management of the 600 sq. km. aquifer system.



GOASCORÁN BASIN (Central America)

PARTICIPATORY MODEL-BUILDING FOSTERS MULTI-LEVEL DIALOGUE

IUCN held a series of workshops for representatives of local communities, municipalities, and national ministries from the basin's riparian countries, Honduras and El Salvador. The participants built a miniature scale model of the 2,345 sq. km. basin. The workshops and model raised awareness of transboundary issues and built trust among local actors. They also facilitated evidence-based, multi-level transboundary dialogue to support existing binational cooperation.



BLUE NILE, ETHIOPIA (East Africa)

DATA ON SEDIMENTATION INFORMS NATIONAL POLICIES WITH TRANSBOUNDARY IMPLICATIONS

The Ethiopian Water and Land Resources Centre (WLRC) generates data and provides relevant open-access information about climate, water flows, soil erosion, and land management within the Blue Nile's catchment area, which contributes about 60 percent of the Nile's flow. With the current construction of the 6,000 MW Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile, erosion control and sustainable land management in the catchment is imperative to reduce sedimentation in the reservoir. Countermeasures suggested by WLRC will also benefit Sudan and Egypt, which suffer from sedimentation of their reservoirs and irrigation schemes as well.



MEKONG BASIN (Southeast Asia)

TRAINING RAISES AWARENESS OF INTERNATIONAL WATER LAW PRINCIPLES AND SUPPORTS CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Through on-demand training, IUCN helped Vietnamese authorities implement the UN Watercourses Convention, which provided a stronger foundation for the country's negotiations with other riparians. Cambodian authorities were sceptical that the existing Mekong River basin agreement was compatible with the convention. An IUCN study and a national seminar convinced key stakeholders that the convention strengthens and complements the Mekong agreement by, for example, legally binding riparians to disclose major infrastructure projects, such as the planned 1,260 MW Xayaburi dam in Laos.



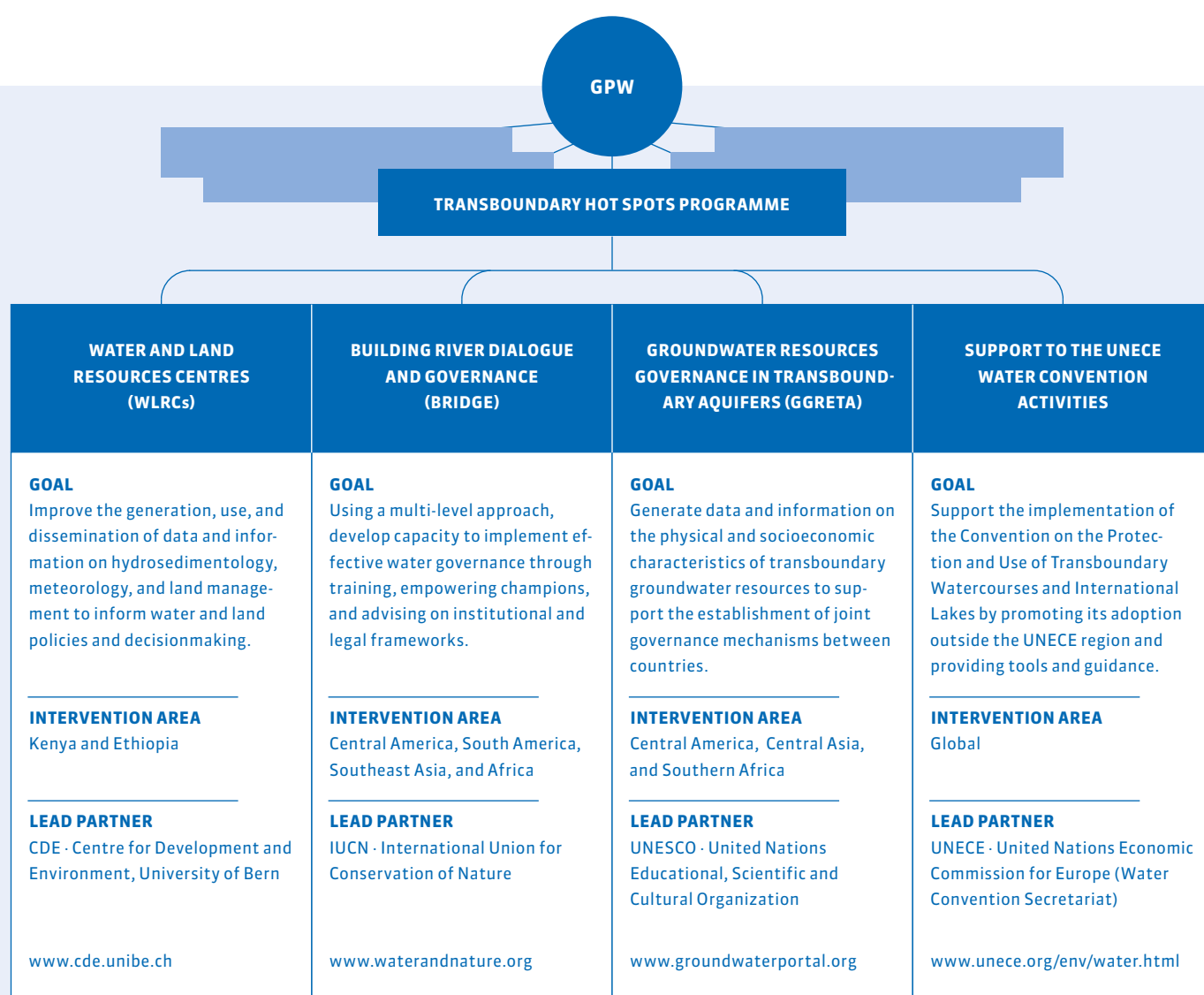
STAMPRIET AQUIFER SYSTEM (Southern Africa)

JOINT ASSESSMENTS ESTABLISH A BASIS FOR A MULTI-COUNTRY CONSULTATION MECHANISM

In cooperation with UNESCO, the countries of Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa jointly assessed the 87,000 sq. km. Stampriet aquifer system, which is the only source for drinking water in that area. Based on the assessment, the three countries have launched discussions to establish a multi-country consultation mechanism for identifying ways to jointly manage the aquifer, such as by monitoring groundwater and preventing pollution. This consultation mechanism would be the first example of institutionalized transboundary aquifer cooperation in southern Africa.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The Global Programme Water (GPW) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) seeks solutions to global water management challenges. It engages in global political dialogues and conducts projects that influence regional and international policy. GPW's »Water Diplomacy and Governance in Key Transboundary Hot Spots« programme seeks to contribute to the equitable, sustainable, and inclusive management and governance of transboundary lakes, rivers, and aquifers. Since the programme began in 2011, SDC has provided more than 15 million Swiss Francs to implement its innovative activities, making it one of GPW's largest initiatives. The programme comprises four synergistic projects that target basins in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as at the global level, in collaboration with four implementing partners. Its third phase will run through 2018.



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