

Formalizing transboundary cooperation and mobilizing support across sectors with a nexus approach in the Balkans (the Drin and Drina Basins)

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WEBINAR: Transboundary water cooperation and coordination between agencies and RCs to support transboundary cooperation

Issue-based Coalition (IBC) on Environment and Climate Change

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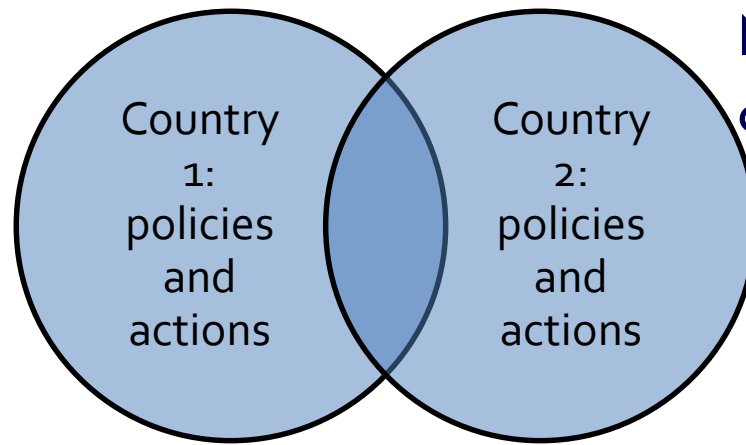


what is the “nexus” and why do we need a nexus approach now?

- Water, energy, and food security are *interlinked*. Without coordination sectors and countries compete with each other on common resources.
- Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030): Evidence of trade-offs between sectoral objectives
- Climate action & post-COVID-19 recovery:
 - Need to invest effectively and efficiently, sharing costs and multiplying benefits



The transboundary dimension & relevance for the Water Convention

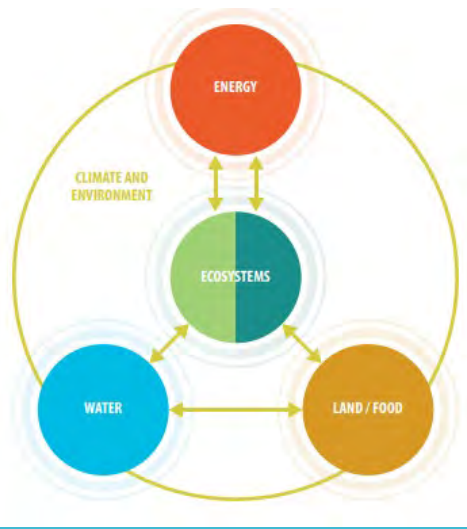


Need for communication, collaboration and joint action!

nexus dialogue
inter-sectoral, cross-country
on water-food-energy-
ecosystems:
resources, uses,
security, and governance

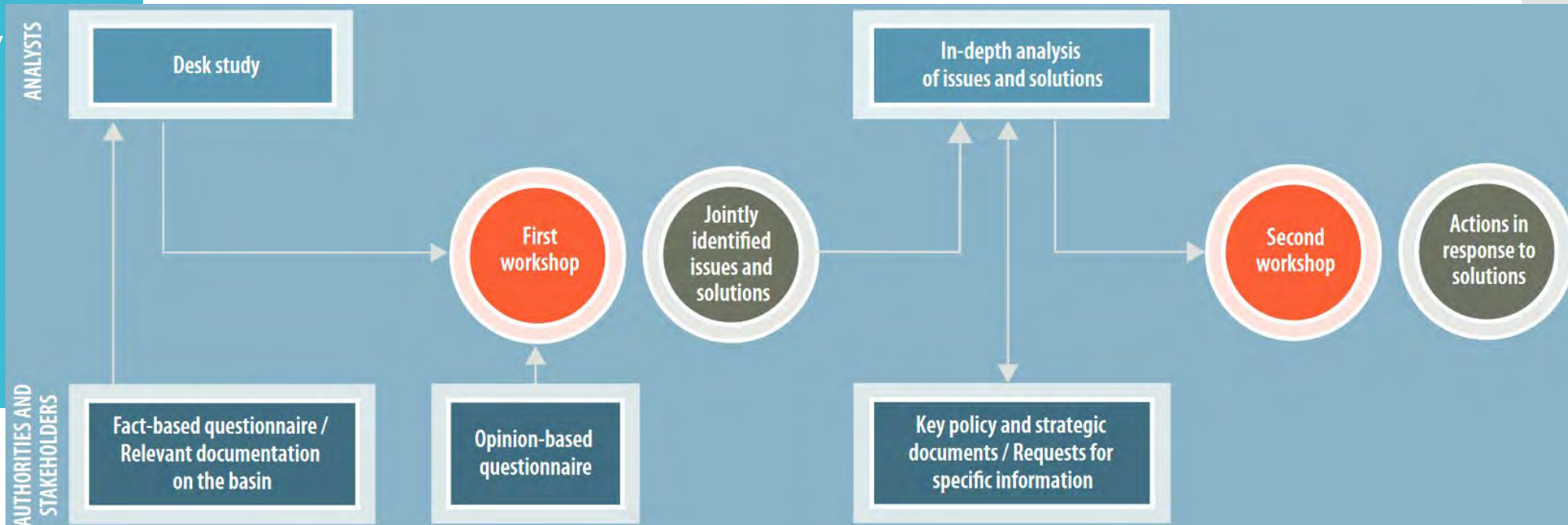
- “nexus issues” are at the heart of *transboundary tensions*, while “nexus solutions” can generate *shared benefits*
- In relation to the Water Convention’s three pillars:
 - *minimizing inter-sectoral impact; addressing inter-sectoral trade-offs* -> Principle of prevention & Principle of reasonable and equitable utilization
 - *realizing inter-sectoral synergies* -> Principle of cooperation





Assessment of the water-food-energy ecosystems Nexus in a nutshell

- **Objective:** To **foster transboundary cooperation** by
 - 1) Identifying intersectoral synergies;
 - 2) Determining policy measures and actions that could alleviate tensions;
 - 3) Assisting countries to optimize their use of resources
- Series of **assessments of intersectoral links, trade-offs and benefits in transboundary basins** (incl. review resource base, resource uses, governance...)
- **Participatory process:** Prepared in close cooperation with national administrations (capacity building); governance assessment informs about the key actors; analysis focuses on jointly identified issues
 - **Flexibility:** existing cooperation frameworks used or new ones supported





* United Nations administered territory under the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

All the reports and policy briefs from the nexus assessments are available at: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/nexus.html>

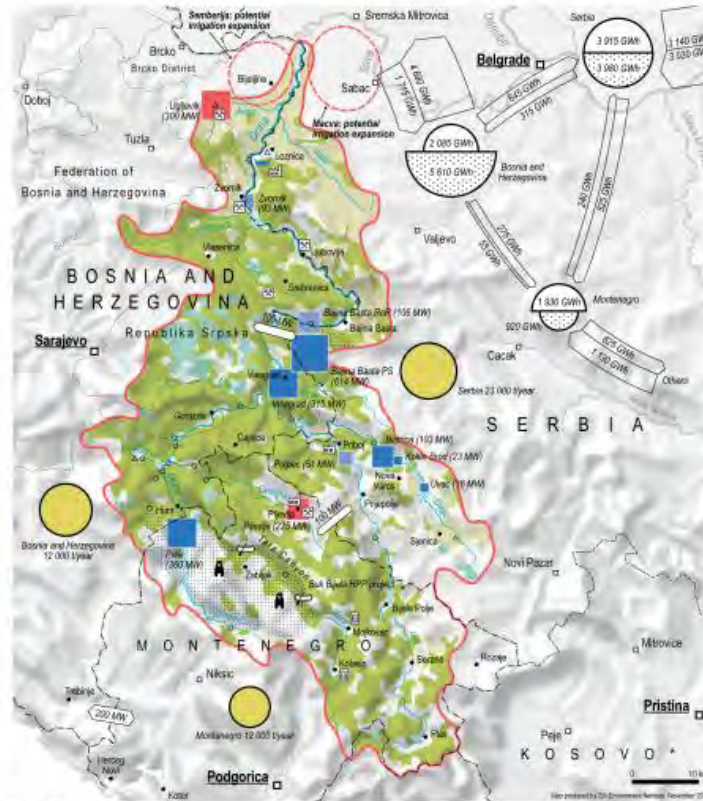
Participatory process to jointly
Identify transboundary issues



INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

The Drina River Basin:
multi-stakeholder engagement on themes of interest; a nexus strategy for the basin

Analysis



Co-optimizing flow regulation

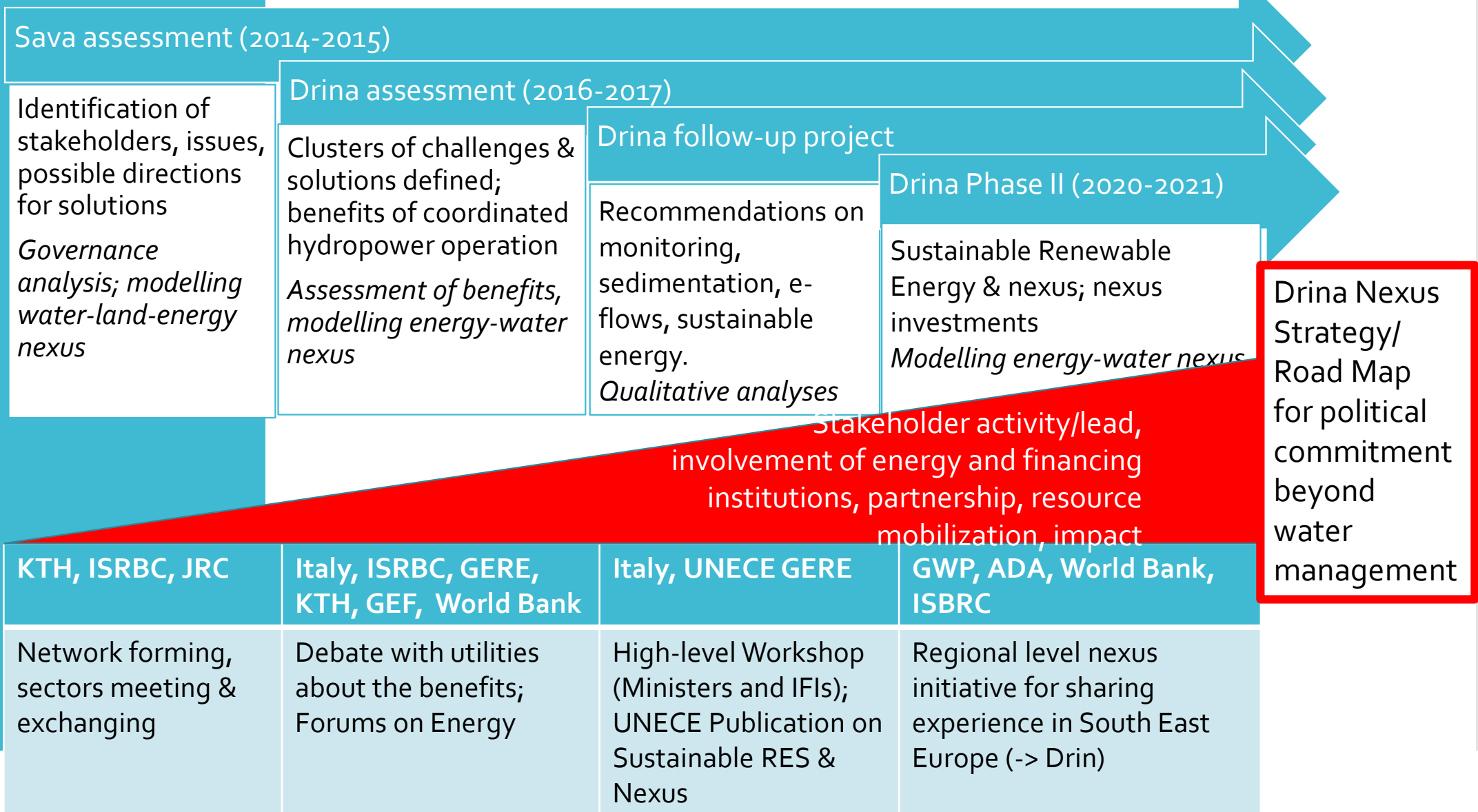
Promoting rural development

Improving water quality

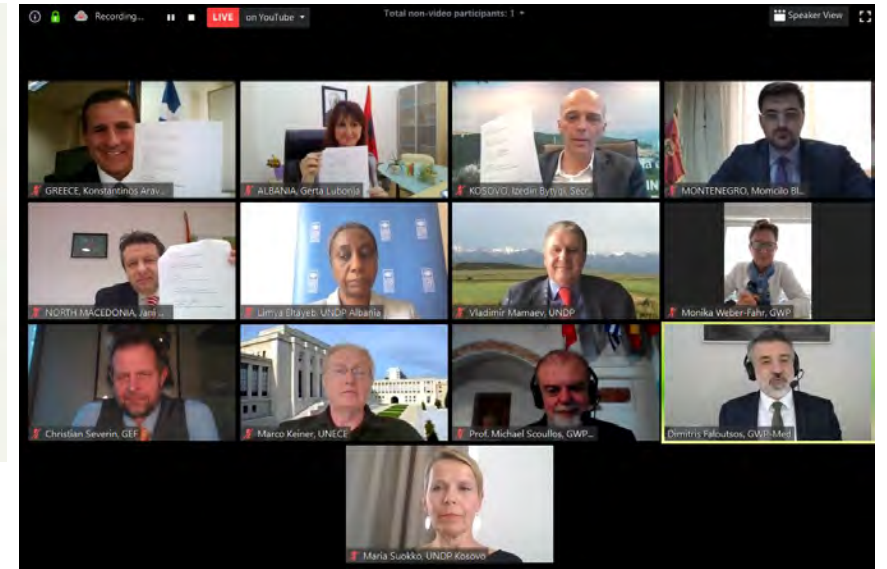
Broadening and developing cooperation

Identification of solutions
and support to specific activities

Nexus Mobilizing resources for cooperation (Sava-Drina)



Drin River Basin:
*formalizing
transboundary
cooperation;
complementing
SAP with nexus*



Drin GEF Project

- Successful example of multi-agency coordination to support transboundary regional cooperation (UNDP, UNECE, UNESCO, GWP-Med)
- Nexus assessment & dialogue
 - adding information to Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (hydropower operations and flood management, biomass-forestry-water linkages, agricultural trade and sustainability)
 - supporting multi-sectoral implementation of **Strategic Action Programme (SAP)** (policy coherence, development of «nexus» project fiches)
- Implementation of the SAP -> countries will need to support!

to-do list for improving inter-sectoral cooperation in tb basins

- **Overcoming “silos thinking”** in policy making and resource management -> reduced friction between sectors and countries, reduced economic losses from inefficiency, enhanced sustainability
- Optimizing use of **infrastructures and strategic investments, joint projects** (benefits to different sectors, lower resource use intensity possible...)
- **“Nexus-proofing”** the legal and regulatory framework, institutions and actors at multiple levels, policies
- Facilitating **information sharing and consultation** -> considering different interests & alternatives
- Highlighting the broad **benefits** of transboundary cooperation
- Several UN agencies and international organizations assisting countries on cross-cutting issues and inter-sectoral cooperation with different approaches and mandates -> **crucial to ensure good inter-UN agency coordination**

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



Support to transboundary water cooperation thanks to:

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



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.

41 States in pan-Europe are Parties

Most agreements on transboundary waters in the pan-European region since 1990 modelled on the Convention

Various guidelines, model provisions and soft law instruments



Supporting formalizing transboundary water cooperation

SDG Target 6.5 contains an explicit call for transboundary water cooperation, the first in a negotiated UN text since Agenda 21 -> **high recognition**

Progress measured globally - SDG Indicator 6.5.2: Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation. UNECE and UNESCO designated as co-custodian agencies. 2nd reporting cycle on-going.

In pan-Europe, the **legal and institutional frameworks for cooperation need strengthening**.

In the Drin and Drina Basins, the regimes are developing. In the Drin Basin, options being explored for upgrading the framework for cooperation, an agreement to be drafted.

Some **lessons** from implementing the Water Convention:

- Focus and support to implementation
- Start with cooperation at technical level
- Focus on issues of common interest and constructive dialogue
- Patience to build trust
- Be ready to not have ideal results
- Cooperation with partners

Many UN entities have experience of supporting cooperation. Opportunities?