



BELÜGYMINISZTERIUM

**The Water Convention – Responding to global
water challenges**

Péter Kovács

Ministry of Interior of Hungary

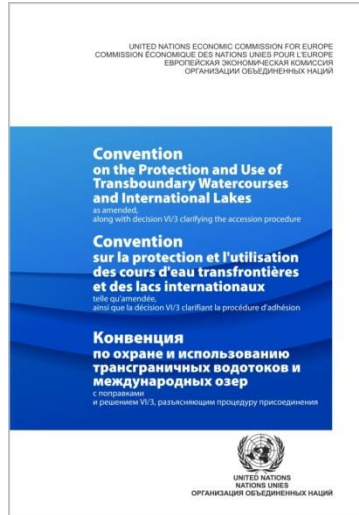


Objective: to protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating cooperation

The Convention is based on three main pillars:

- Principle of prevention
- Principle of reasonable and equitable utilization
- Principle of cooperation

Sustainability of resources is the overarching objective



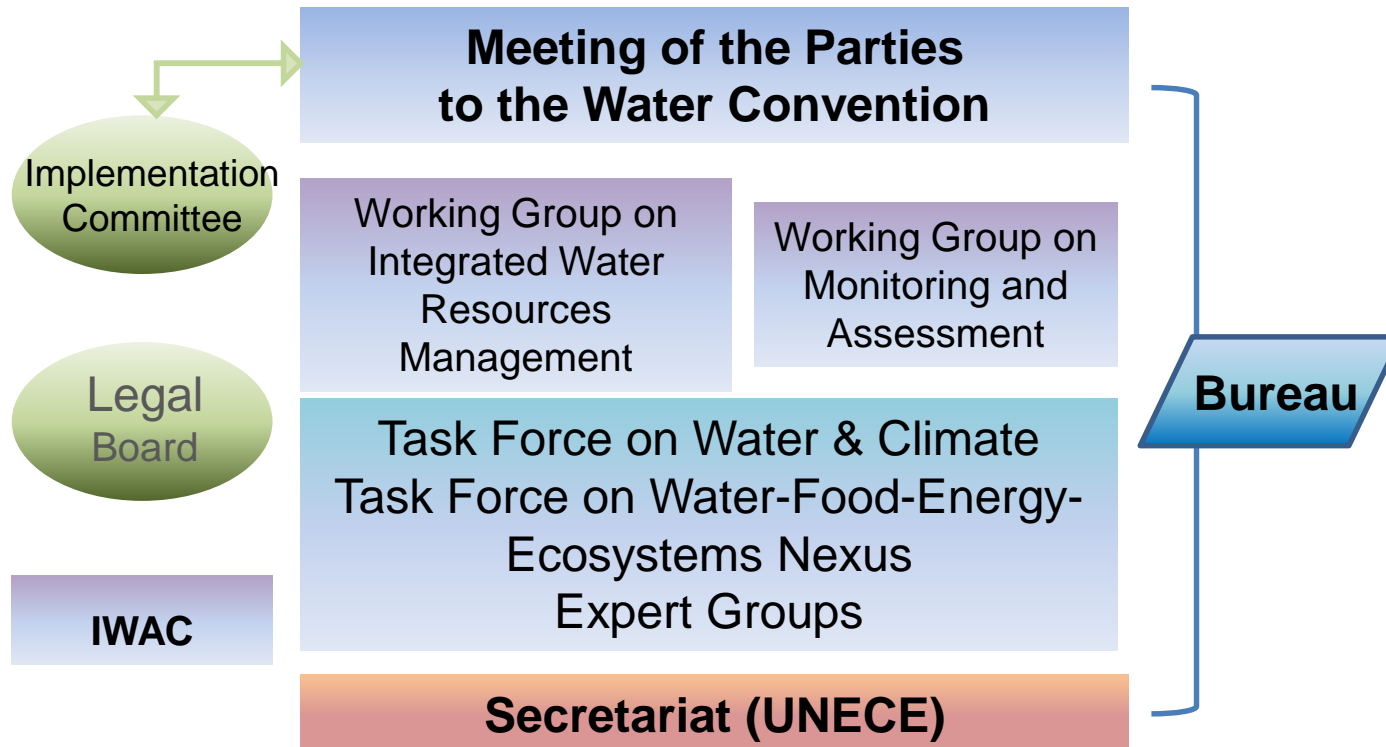
A sound legal base

An active institutional framework

Activities and projects on the ground



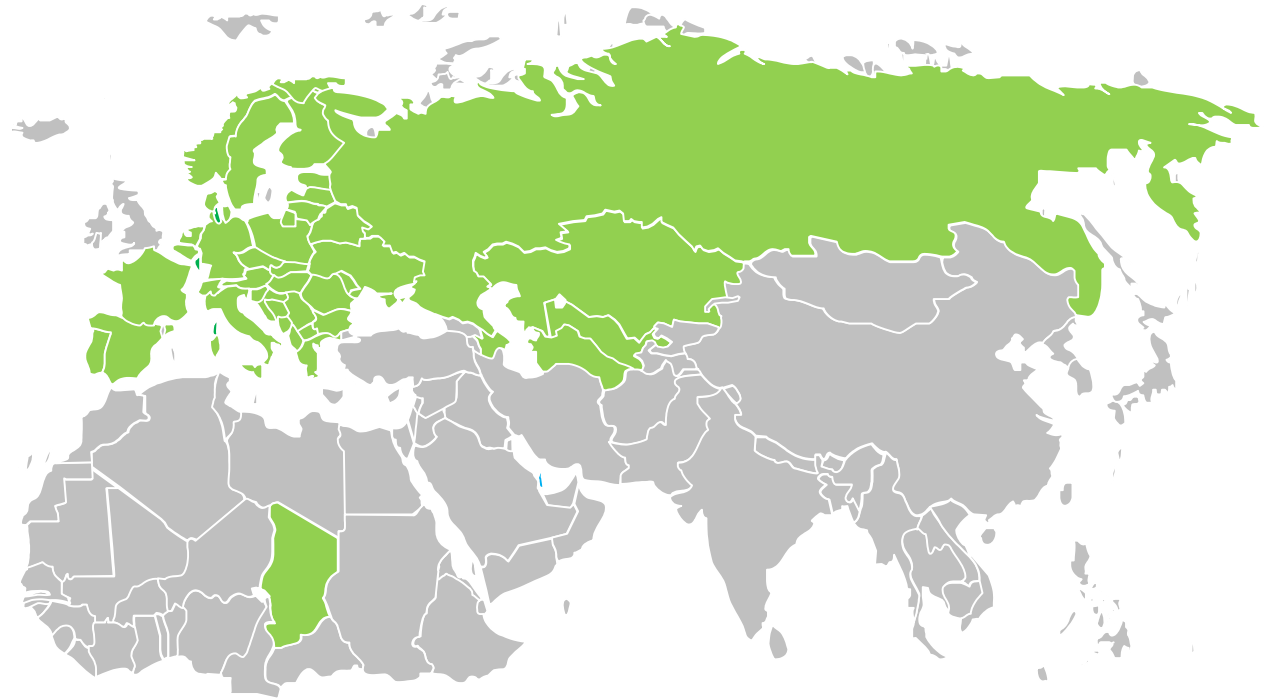
Institutional framework





Status of ratification of the UNECE Water Convention

42 Parties





History of the Convention's globalization

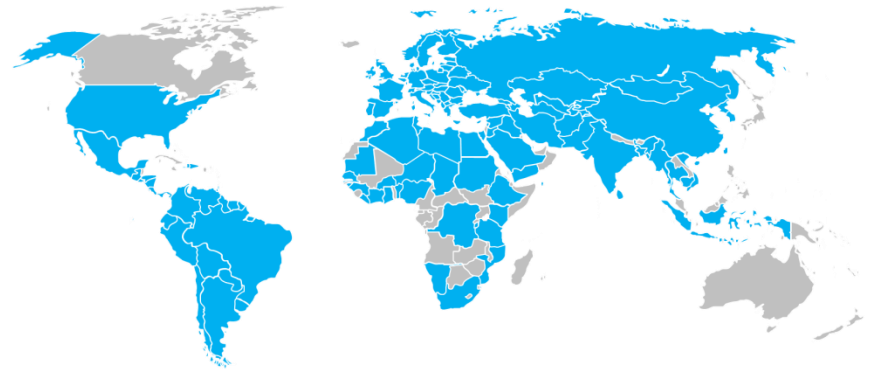
- 1992: Adoption of the Water Convention
- 1996: Entry into force of the Convention
- 2003: Adoption of the amendment allowing all UN Member States to accede to the Convention
- 2012: Blanket approval by the Meeting of the Parties for all future requests for accession
- 2013: Entry into force of the amendment
- **1st March 2016: Operationalization of the Amendment: all UN Member States can accede to the Convention**
- *More than 60 countries from outside UNECE have already participated in the Convention's activities*
- *Several countries have expressed interest to accession or have the process on-going: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Niger, Peru, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Vietnam*
- **Chad acceded as first non-UNECE country in February 2018**



Why was the Convention opened for global membership?

- ✓ Build on the success achieved
- ✓ Apply the principles and provisions worldwide
- ✓ Share the experiences of the Convention
- ✓ Learn from other regions of the world
- ✓ Broaden political support for transboundary cooperation
- ✓ Jointly develop solutions to common challenges

In practice, participation in the Convention's activities is already global



Participation in events under the Water Convention



Support to implementation through soft law development under the Water Convention

- Water pollution by hazardous substances (1994)
- Licensing of wastewater discharges (1996)
- Monitoring & assessment of rivers & lakes (1996) and groundwaters (2000)
- Sustainable flood prevention (2000)
- Safety of pipelines (2006)
- Payments for ecosystem services (2007)
- Transboundary flood management (2007)
- Safety of tailing management facilities (2009)
- Water and adaptation to climate change (2009)
- Guide to Implementing the Water Convention (2013)
- Model provisions on transboundary ground waters (2012)
- Policy guidance note on identifying, assessing and communicating the benefits of transboundary cooperation (2015)



Measuring transboundary water cooperation



- **SDG 6:** “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.



Target 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

- **107 country responded** by March 2018 (out of 153 countries sharing transboundary waters)
 - Indicator 6.5.2 available for 62 countries (transboundary river & lake basins and aquifers)
 - 87 countries provided accurate data for transboundary river & lake basins, and
 - 64 countries for transboundary aquifers
- 59% = average of the national percentage of transboundary basins covered by an operational arrangement
- 17 countries with all transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements
- Significant effort needed to ensure that operational arrangements cover all transboundary waters, especially aquifers.



Benefits of accession

A Party to the Convention

- has a solid international legal framework
- enhances its capacity to cooperate on the management of transboundary waters
- has a platform to openly discuss and resolve challenges and address new, more advanced issues in cooperation in specific basins through the exchange of experiences and good practices.
- has access to financial assistance and donor cooperation
- contributes to international peace and security
- can participate in the Water Convention's institutional structure and decision making, so fostering the implementation of the Convention and its further development.
- provides advice and sharing of experience
- can have all kind of support from the community of Parties and partners in implementation



Other institutional cooperation

The Convention's partners

- International intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other actors

(United Nations regional commissions, UNESCO, GEF, UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP, WMO, FAO, the World Bank, INBO, IUNC, GWP, ENVSEC, RECs, Conservation International, Dundee

University, WWF, Green Cross International, SIWI, AMCOW, ANBO, European Commission, EEA, OECD, OSCE, SADC, UN-Water activities)

- The Water Convention actively cooperates with the secretariats and governing bodies of other multilateral agreements, (UNFCCC, Ramsar Convention, UNCCD, the Alpine Convention and all UNECE multilateral environmental agreements)

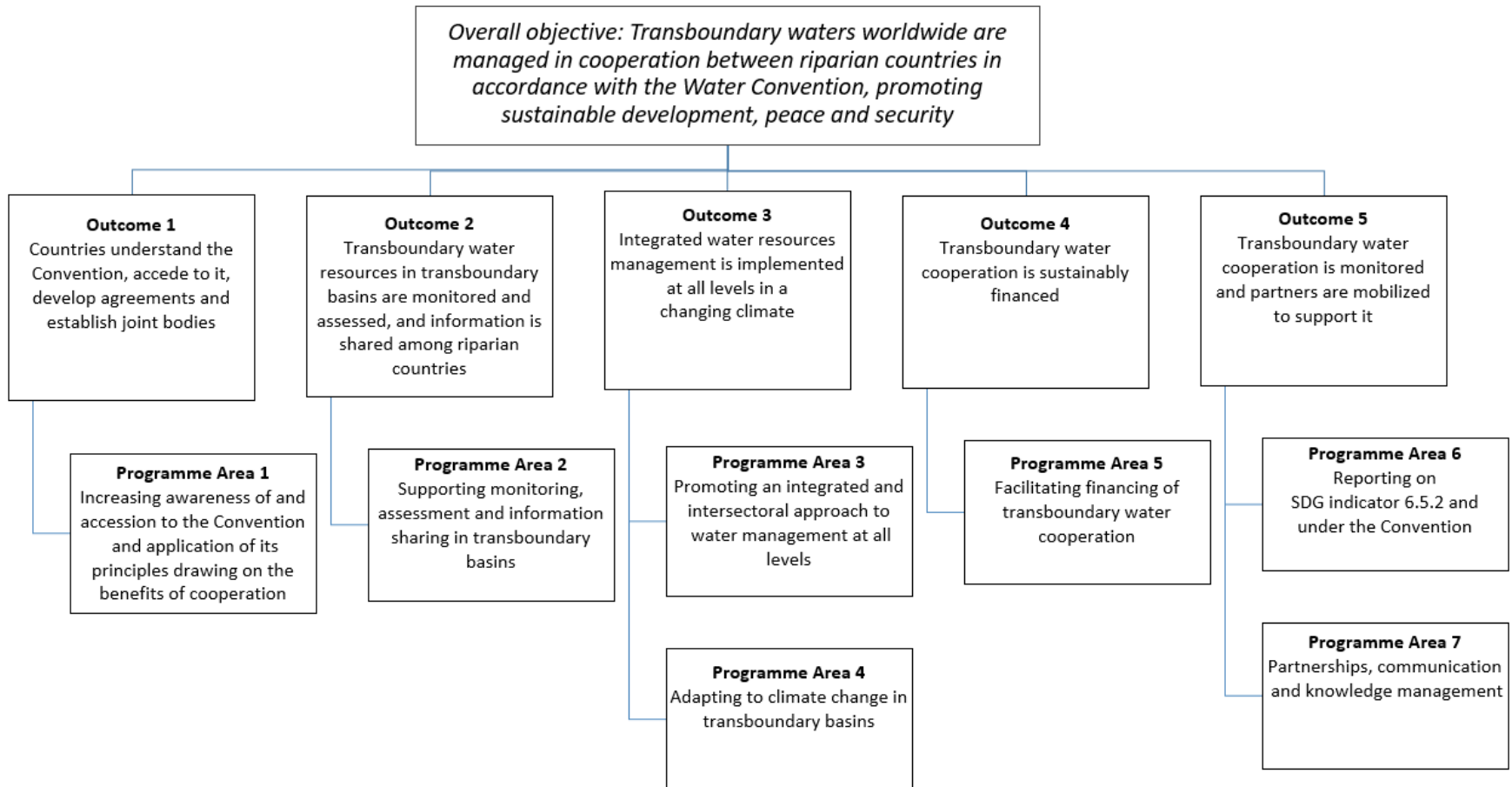


Lessons learned from 20 years of implementing the Convention

- Strong legal and institutional frameworks => legitimacy of efforts
- Catalyst for cooperation, balanced approach for both upstream and downstream countries
- Focus and support to implementation
- Start with cooperation at technical level
- Focus on issues of common/global interest and constructive dialogue
- Patience to build trust
- Cooperation with partners
- Continuous evolution to address emerging issues with conflict potential (such as dam safety)
- Monitor progress



Programme of work for 2019-2021





8th Meeting of the Parties



10-12 October 2018



Astana, Kazakhstan



More than 400 representatives of Ministries responsible for water, foreign affairs and development cooperation from Parties and non-Parties to the Convention, joint bodies, international and non-governmental organizations and academia from all regions of the world.

Why important?



- Milestone event in the Water Convention's globalization
- First Meeting of the Parties held in Asia
- Participation of the first Parties from Africa



Thank you for your kind attention !