



# Women inclusion in the governance of a transboundary aquifer and dependent-ecosystem in Central America

*2018 World Water Week*

*Stockholm, 28 August 2018*

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# UNESCO's leading role in transboundary groundwater governance

- In Central America, UNESCO and IUCN joined forces in a project for improving the governance of the Ocotepeque-Citala Transboundary Aquifer (OCTA) shared by El Salvador and Honduras.
- **Governance of Groundwater Resources in Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA)** (2013-2019).

ISARM – UNESCO Programme on *International Shared Aquifers Resources Management*



# GENDER COMPONENT IN TRANSBOUNDARY GROUNDWATER GOVERNANCE



GGRETA is a gender-responsive project: it promotes gender equality and aims to support countries' *actions to gender mainstream* water policies, at local, national and transboundary level.



# RESULTS FROM THE GENDER ASSESSMENT ON TRANSBOUNDARY GROUNDWATER GOVERNANCE



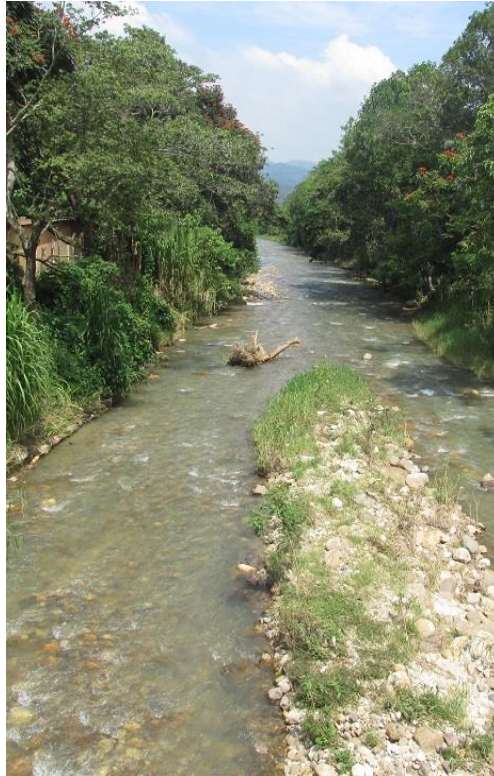
## Current situation:

- a) 18% and 26% of **Water Boards members** in El Salvador and Honduras, respectively, are women;
- b) Women have limited but **active participation** in agricultural cooperatives in the OCTA area, with percentages ranging from 10 to 20;
- c) By law, in El Salvador and Honduras, local institutions like municipalities must have **dedicated offices for women's empowerment to facilitate their participation in productive activities.**





# GENDER IN TRANSBOUNDARY GROUNDWATER GOVERNANCE



The GGRETA Project is facilitating **women's effective participation in decision making:**

- **Technical perspective:** Ensuring that local women associations are trained on monitoring water quality as a means to be able to effectively inform and alert stakeholders in case of pollution
- **Legal and institutional perspective:** Ensuring that gender issues are considered in the on-going negotiations for the establishment of a bilateral cooperation mechanism (“Management Committee”) for the management of the aquifer



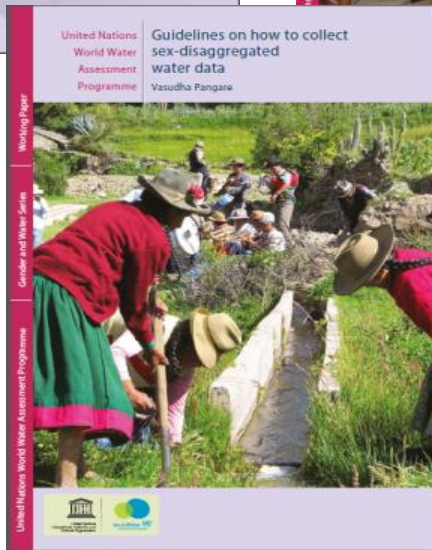
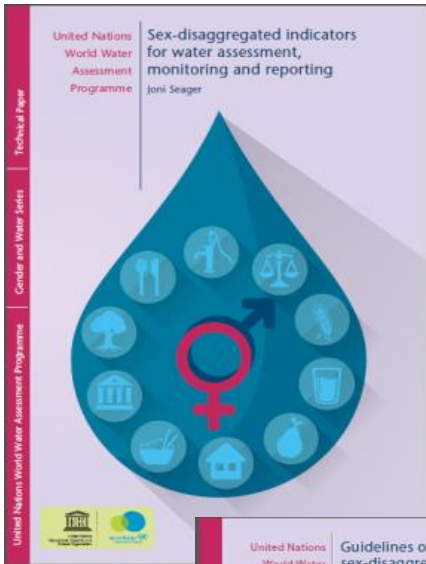
# CONCLUSIONS

The pioneering attempt in Central America to assess women's participation in *transboundary groundwater governance* and support their full involvement in future actions has demonstrated that gender-responsive approach could help:

- i) Identify strengths and weaknesses of existing national and international (ground)water governance frameworks
- ii) Mainstream gender in legal and institutional frameworks
- iii) Actively involve women in the management, protection and conservation of groundwater resources and dependent ecosystems, by creating capacity at local level (monitoring water quality/quantity in the field), hence addressing SDG6 and SDG15
- iv) Inform/improve national/international water policies and groundwater governance schemes through the collection of sex-disaggregated water data







# MORE TO DO

Local and national stakeholders from both countries have recognized the lack of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated water data as baseline to inform policies, plans and national/regional strategies.

They made a call for capacity development on gender analysis in particular on methodologies for the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated water data, through the UNESCO-WWAP “Water and Gender Toolkit”.



# THANK YOU!

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