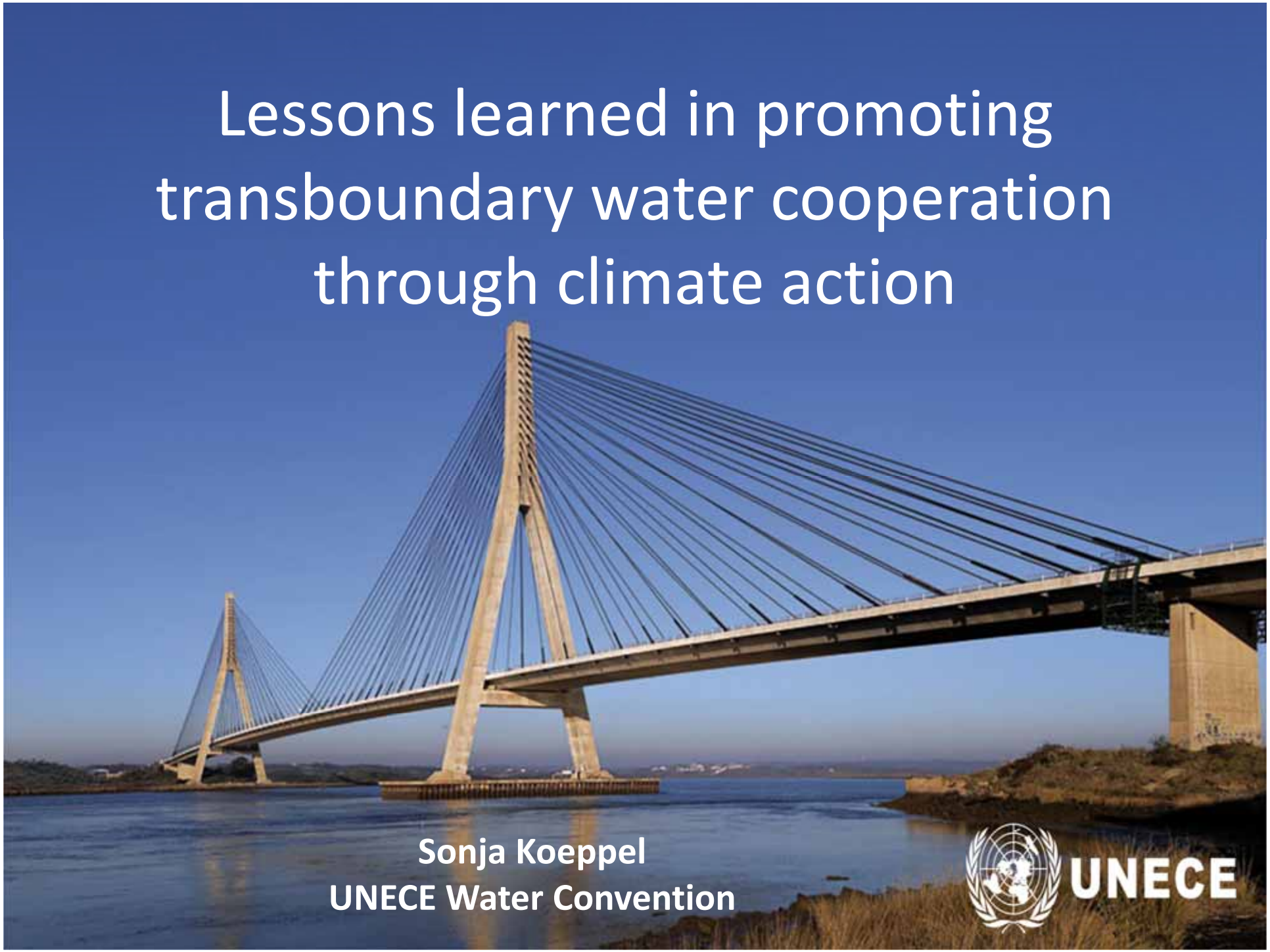
Presentation from

2016 World Water Week in Stockholm

www.worldwaterweek.org

Lessons learned in promoting transboundary water cooperation through climate action



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Why basin-wide cooperation in adaptation?

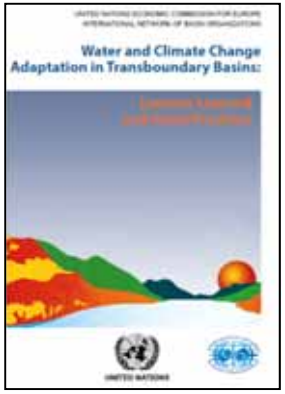
- Prevent negative impacts of unilateral adaptation measures in riparian countries, thereby preventing potential conflict

- Enable more effective and efficient adaptation through:
  - Wider knowledge base
  - Larger planning space: take measures in the basin where they have optimum effect
  - Possibility to share costs and benefits

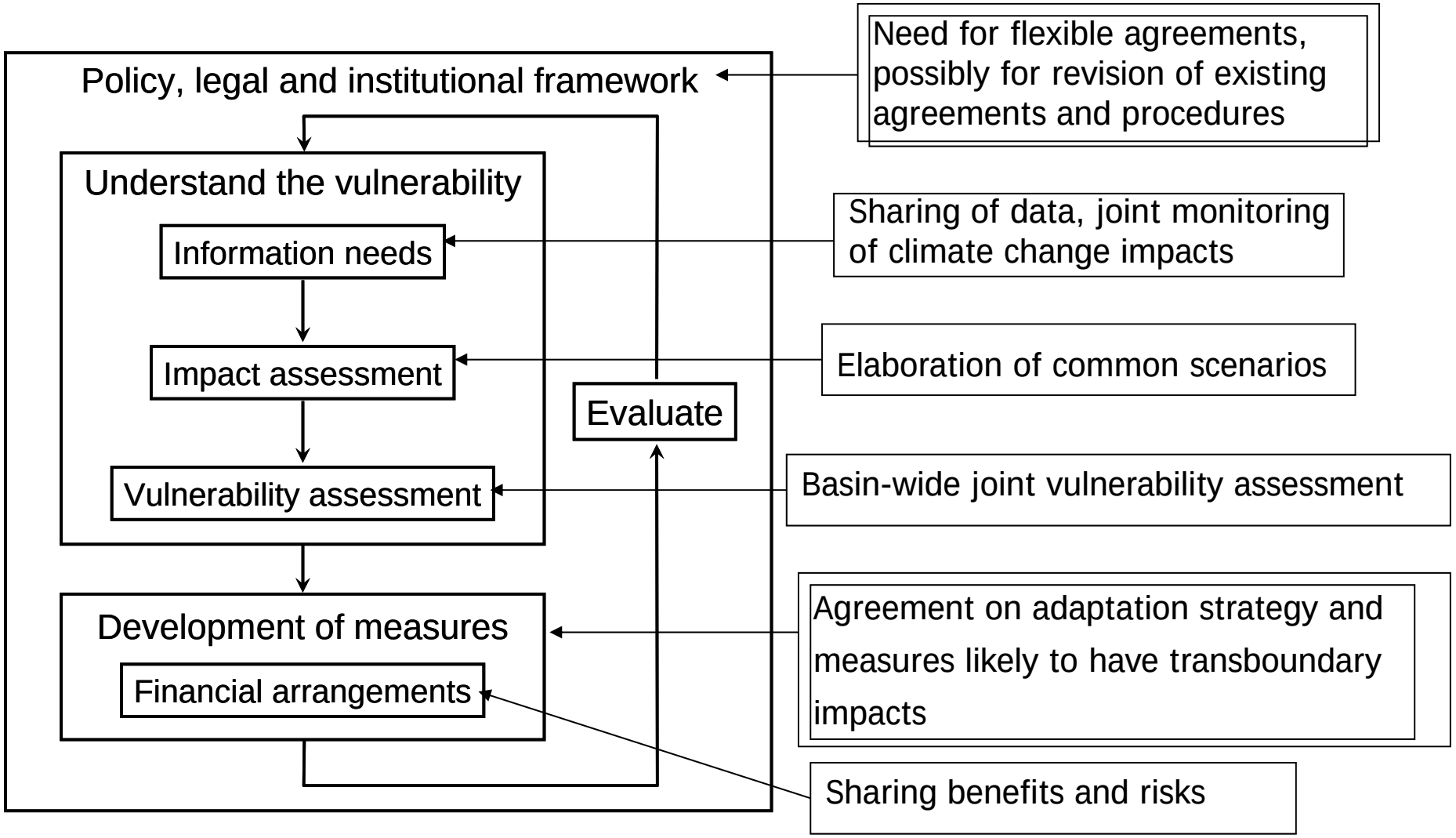
→ Transboundary/ basin-wide cooperation reduces uncertainty and costs!

Climate change activities under the Water Convention

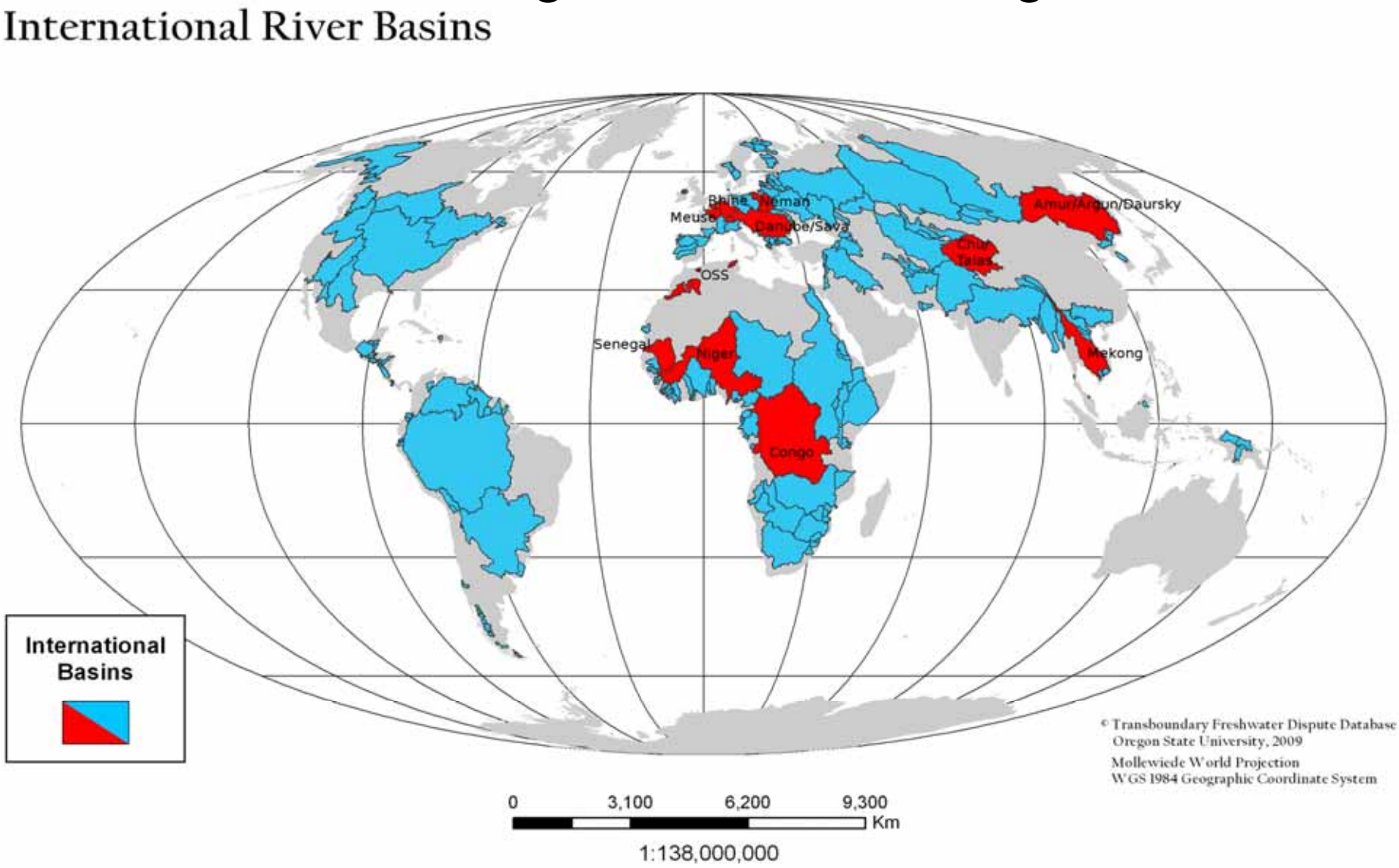
- Provisions of the Water Convention can help countries and basins adapt to climate change
- Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change adopted in 2009
- Programme of pilot projects on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins (Chu Talas, Neman, Dniester, Sava rivers)
- (Global) Platform for exchanging experience on this: regular workshops
- Global network of 14 basins working on climate change
- Collection of good practices and lessons learned published in 2015
- Policy work in global processes, such as UNFCCC COPs, ISDR



Cooperation needs in every step of developing an adaptation strategy



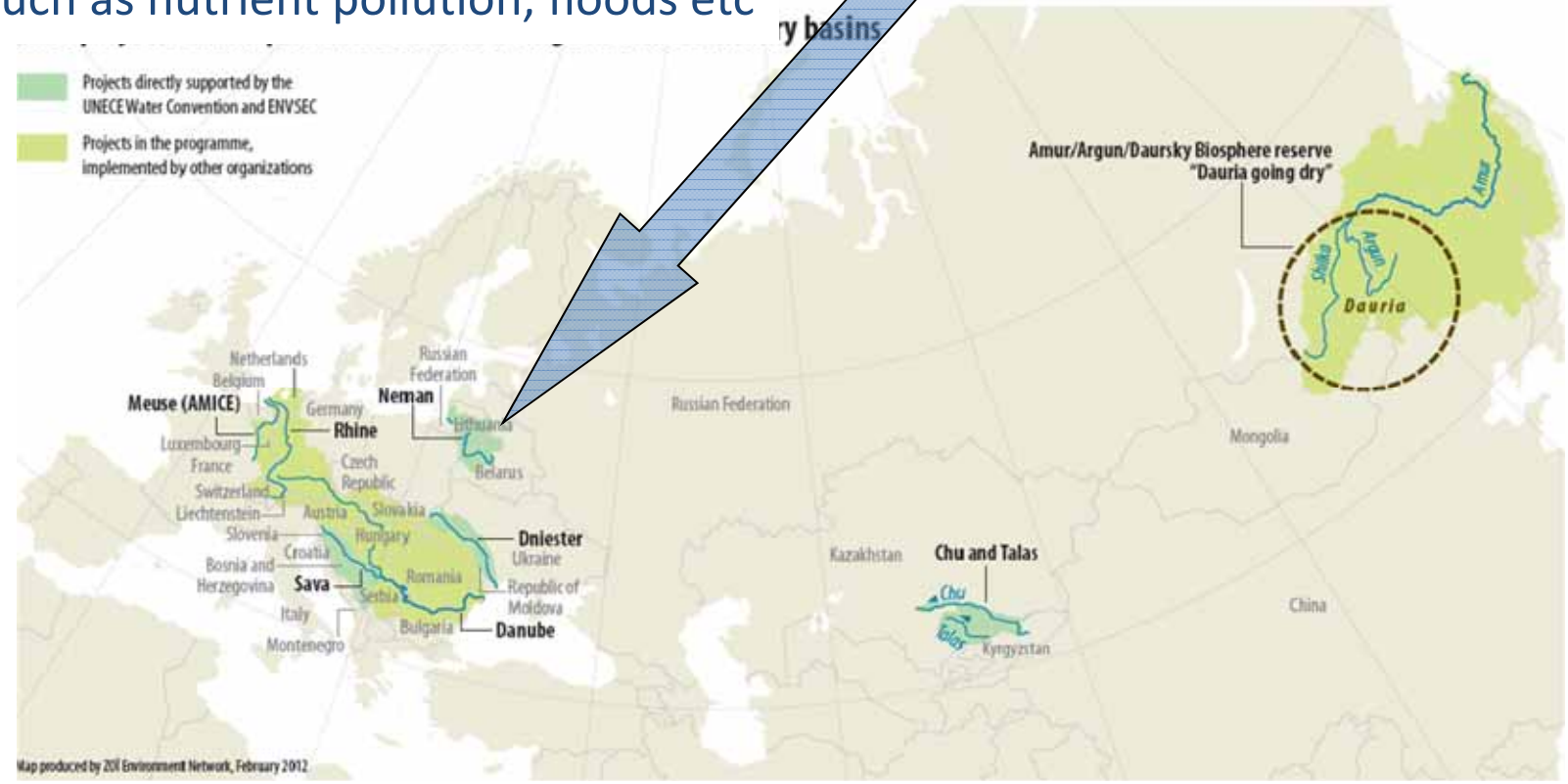
Basins in the global network of basins
Working on climate change



Example: Neman pilot project shared by Belarus and Lithuania (and Russia)

Baseline situation in 2010:

- Political tensions between the countries, geopolitical hotspot
- Absence of contacts at political level, some expert contacts
- Absence of a legal and institutional framework for cooperation
- Problems such as nutrient pollution, floods etc



Situation in the Neman in 2016

- Strengthened capacity to adapt to climate change of the riparian countries e.g. through developing a transboundary adaptation strategy
- Common understanding on future water availability and water use taking into account possible climate change impacts
- Input by Belarus to Lithuanian river basin management plan for Neman: basin as good practice example of EU-non-EU cooperation
- Improved transboundary cooperation in times of a changing climate in the Neman: draft bilateral technical Protocol (BY-LI) elaborated

How was this done?

- *Starting cooperation at expert level*: Assessment of the current state of the water resources of the Neman River basin
- *Focusing on a non-political issue of common concern: climate change:* Elaboration of common cc scenarios and forecasting of runoff changes, calculation of water balances, assessment and forecast of climate change impact on water quality
- *Comparing systems:* Analysis of the meteorological, hydrological, hydrochemical and hydrobiological monitoring systems in the basin
- *Sharing data:* Development of a common information platform
- *Joint experiences:* Common Field trip on the Neman in 2012
- *Involving stakeholders*: Three multi-stakeholder workshops in each basin country with stakeholders from different regions and sectors, many expert meetings and one high-level project conference
- *Agreeing on climate change impacts and actions*: Vulnerability assessment and strategic framework for basin adaptation

Strategic framework for climate change adaptation: Overview of Measures

Group of measures	Description of measures	Total estimated cost
Direct actions at the basin level	Signing an international agreement on the Neman River Basin	-
	Setting up and functioning of an International Commission for the Neman River Basin.	€
	Development of the overall Neman River Basin Management Plan	€
	Evaluation of status of ground waters and their vulnerability to climate change	€€

€- up to 100 ths €; €€- up to 1 mln €; €€€- from 1 to 10 mln €; €€€€- over 10 mln €

Other lessons learned of the network

1. Often some climate change studies had already been done nationally, but with different methodologies: importance of joint scenarios, modelling and vulnerability assessment, but extent of harmonization depends on resources and time available
2. Importance of thorough baseline study
3. Importance of link between political and experts' level, e.g. through creation of a working group and regular meetings
4. Institutional and cultural differences can be overcome through focusing on common interests, expert cooperation etc.
5. Importance of concrete activities and involving population
6. Importance and difficulty to link to national level, need for coordination and mainstreaming

Conclusions

- Transboundary adaptation is a challenge, but it can be more efficient and effective
- There is a need to communicate and reflect this in the climate negotiations, climate funds etc.
- A vulnerability assessment should be prepared at the transboundary basin scale
- A basin organization is crucial, but cooperation on adaptation can also facilitate setting up of joint bodies
- Inclusive process is needed
- A flexible legal framework, such as a transboundary agreement, is important
- Transboundary cooperation on adaptation can eventually positively influence cooperation in general
- Invitation to our next global workshop on financing climate adaptation in basins on 13-14 September in Geneva

Thank you for your attention!

More information

http://unece.org/env/water

www.unece.org/env/water/water_climate_activ

https://www2.unece.org/ehlm/platform/display/ClimateChange

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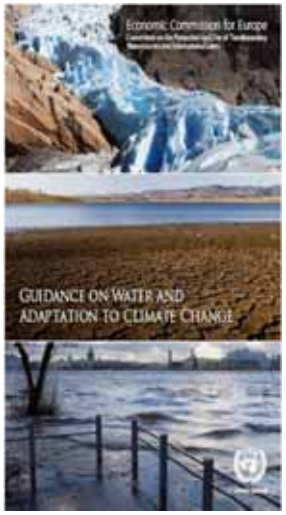
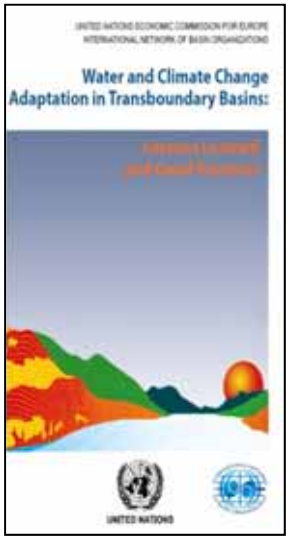
Achievements on climate change adaptation/ flood management

- Important legal framework for cooperation on transboundary aspects of climate change
- Global platform for exchanging experience: Task Force on Water and Climate since 2006, annual workshops since 2010
- Knowledge management hub: Guidance and collection of good practices and lessons learned on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change, Model provisions on transb. Flood management
- Programme of pilot projects and global network of transboundary basins working on climate change (Dniester, Neman, Niger, Congo, Mekong, etc.)





➢ Selected Achievements:

- Transboundary vulnerability assessments for the Dniester and Chu Talas
- Development of transboundary climate change adaptation strategies in Dniester and Neman which prioritize adaptation measures from basin perspective
- Revival of transboundary cooperation at political level in the Neman basin through cooperation on climate change, contribution to RBMP
- Implementation of adaptation measures in 3 areas in the Dniester: monitoring and information exchange, ecosystem restoration, awareness-raising. Reservoir modelling by AGWA

Activities on climate change in 2016-2018

- Increase recognition of the need for transboundary cooperation in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction
- Further mainstream climate change into the water community
- Exchange and collection of experience: e.g. focused on adaptation-mitigation linkages, scenarios, water scarcity, financing
- Replicate and upscale experience of the pilot projects and ensure their sustainability:

➢ Implement developed transboundary adaptation strategies, e.g. implement some measures: Neman, Dniester, Chu-Talas

➢ New basins in UNECE region having expressed interest: Alazani/Ganikh, Daugava, Mesozoic Transboundary Aquifer System (Belarus, Poland and Ukraine), Pripyat, Zapadny Bug, Panj, etc.

➢ New basins outside the UNECE-region: Congo, Mekong, etc.

Water and Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins: Lessons Learned and Good Practices: Selected Lessons Learned

- 1. Develop an adaptation strategy at transboundary level
- 11. Ensure that adaptation policies consider climate change as one of many pressures on water resources
- 40. Evaluate thematic, spatial & temporal areas of data coverage/gaps
- 42. Develop a common understanding of concepts of vulnerability, opportunity, impacts & uncertainty related to climate change

- 50. Ensure monitoring & observation systems capable of adjusting to changes in information needs
- 53. When selecting adaptation measures consider their impact on mitigation
- 55. Locate adaptation measures at most beneficial location in a transboundary basin. Consider sharing costs & benefits