



Transboundary Water Management: strengthening capacity for the management of shared waters

Context

Transboundary water basins cover almost half of the earth's land area. There are over 250 river and lake basins and more than 300 aquifer systems worldwide that are shared by two countries or more. Over 40 % of the world's population currently lives within a transboundary basin. In many of these areas, water demand is rising on account of growing populations and economies. High climatic variability is being compounded by climate change, making water flows more irregular and increasing the incidence of extreme events like floods and droughts. Concurrently, the potential for productive use of water resources is still largely untapped: in Africa, less than 5 % of cultivated land is irrigated, less than 10 % of hydropower potential has been developed, and water storage capacity is generally low. In many basins, the development of water resources is therefore high on the political agenda. The development of hydropower, water storage or irrigation can, however, have negative effects – e.g. reduced water availability for downstream riparians. This can be a source of conflict among states – one of the barriers to the development of water infrastructure. Riparian states, depending on their interests, base their caveats on one of the two key principles of emerging international water law: the right to an equitable share in basin water resources and on the right not to be harmed by the actions of other riparian states. One of the central approaches to transboundary water management is to induce a shift in focus of negotiations from the challenges of partitioning water resources to the benefits that can be gained and the risks that can be mitigated through cooperation. A basic premise for this is a stable relationship of trust between the riparian states. Efficient institutions, networks and organisations are required that can facilitate the cooperation process based on sound knowledge of a basin's water resources.

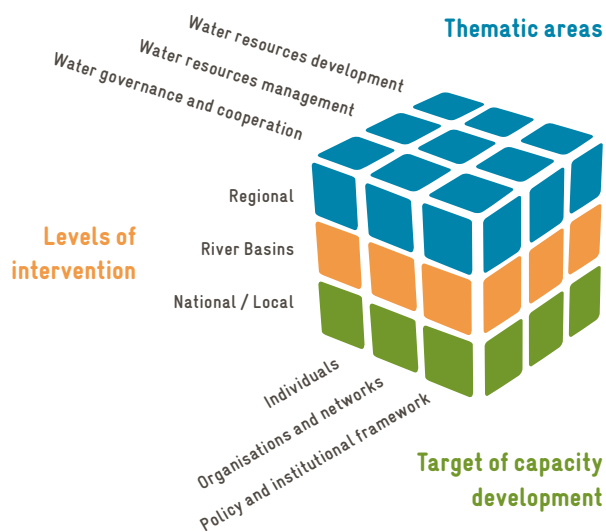
GIZ's capacity development approach

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), on behalf of the German Government and other co-funding partners, is currently implementing programmes that support cooperative water management in more than 15 transboundary river and lake basins across Africa, Asia and South-Eastern Europe. GIZ also supports several regional organisations and regional economic communities in developing and implementing transboundary water policies.

GIZ's basic approach is capacity development and is guided by the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). This approach focuses on developing enabling policy and institutional frameworks for transboundary water resource development and management as well as on strengthening organisations and the capacities of individuals required to put solutions into practice.

GIZ – guided by the subsidiarity principle – strengthens capacities for transboundary water management on various intervention levels: regional organisations and regional economic communities; river and lake basin organisations; and national riparian states and their local communities.

GIZ supports capacity development in three main strategic areas: (1) water cooperation and governance; (2) water resources management; and (3) water resource development. GIZ promotes a cross-sector policy approach that addresses linkages between water, energy and food security, and the environment.



GIZ provides capacity development support in the following core areas:

- Promoting international dialogue on transboundary waters (transboundary dialogue):** GIZ supports the implementation of international water dialog processes and regional dialogue formats for developing shared understandings of transboundary water management.
- Strengthening transboundary institutional frameworks and basin organisations (institutional strengthening):** GIZ supports the establishment of institutional frameworks for transboundary cooperation and river basin organisations. It advises regional and basin organisations in their organisational development, for example improving their planning and management capacities.
- Supporting the development and harmonisation of transboundary water policies (water policy):** GIZ supports the development of regional and basin-wide policies and the harmonisation of national water policies with the requirements of transboundary cooperation.

- Building capacities for knowledge-based water resource planning and management (water resource knowledge and planning):** GIZ supports the sharing of information and the development of the water resource knowledge base required for resources monitoring, basin planning and operational management.

- Building capacities for transboundary water infrastructure planning, preparation and operation (infrastructure planning and operation):** GIZ supports the development and implementation of regional water infrastructure investment plans. GIZ strengthens framework conditions for water infrastructure planning and supports the operation of transboundary infrastructure.

- Strengthening capacities to adapt to climatic risks and climate change (adaptation to climate change):** GIZ supports the development of regional and basin climate change adaptation strategies and the development of policies and capacities for the climate-proofing of plans and infrastructure. Furthermore, GIZ supports the development of adaptive water management to cope with climatic variability.

Impact

The direct outcomes of GIZ's support are in first line improved cooperation and strengthened capacity for transboundary water resources management and development. This contributes to increased water security in regards to acceptable level of water availability for people's livelihoods, ecosystems and production and acceptable levels of risks to people, environment and economies. It contributes to the development of water infrastructure and provision of water services. In the broader and long term perspective, GIZ's work contributes to realise positive impacts of in transboundary cooperation for growth and socio-economic development of the poor, reduction of water-related conflicts, increased regional integration, protection of water resources and water dependant ecosystems, adaptation to climate change and the reduction of water-related risks.

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