

# UNECE Water Convention: work programme and recent experiences

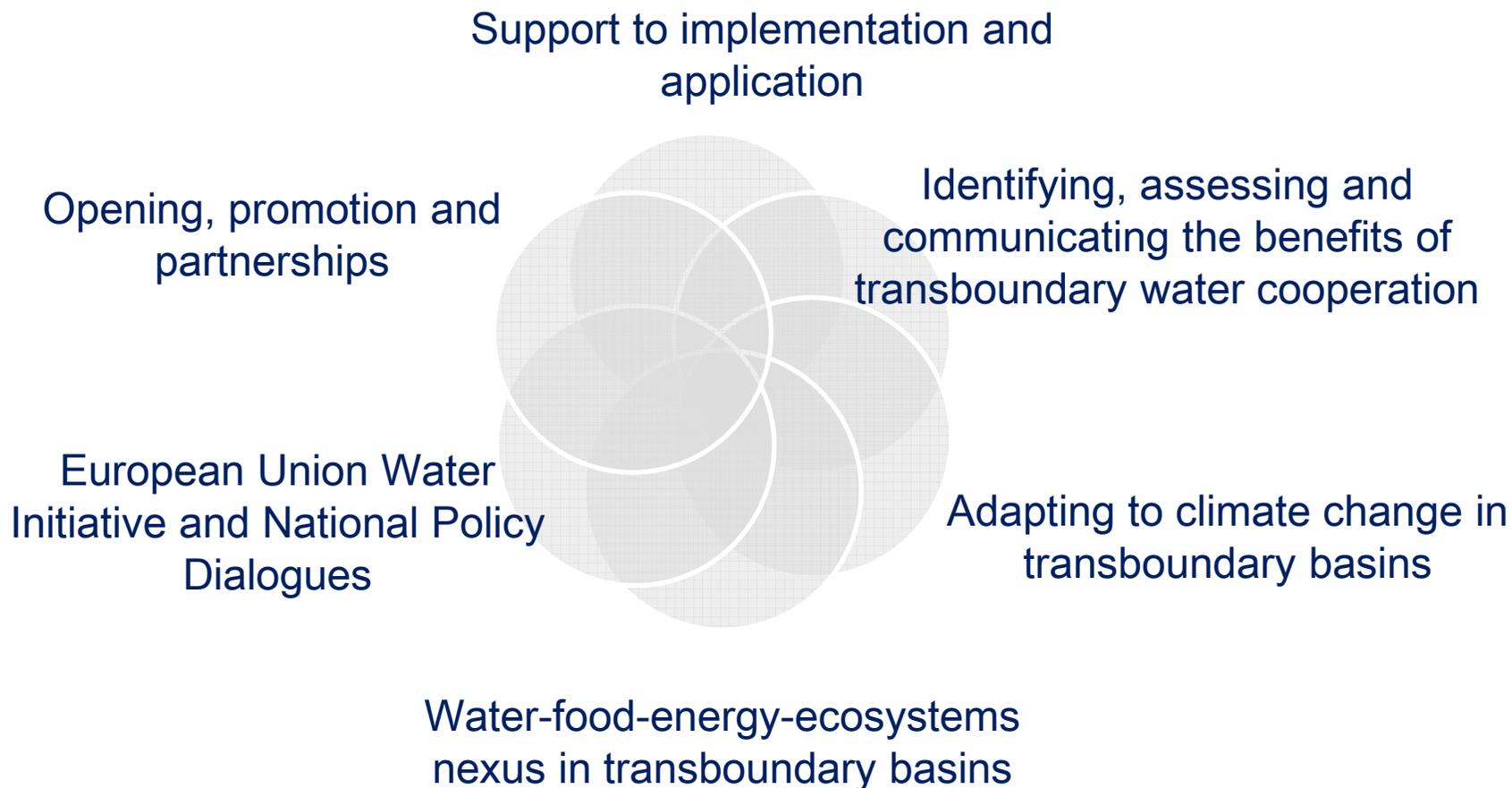
Transboundary water cooperation and international water law,  
Athens

Nick Bonvoisin / 14-15 June 2016



**UNECE**

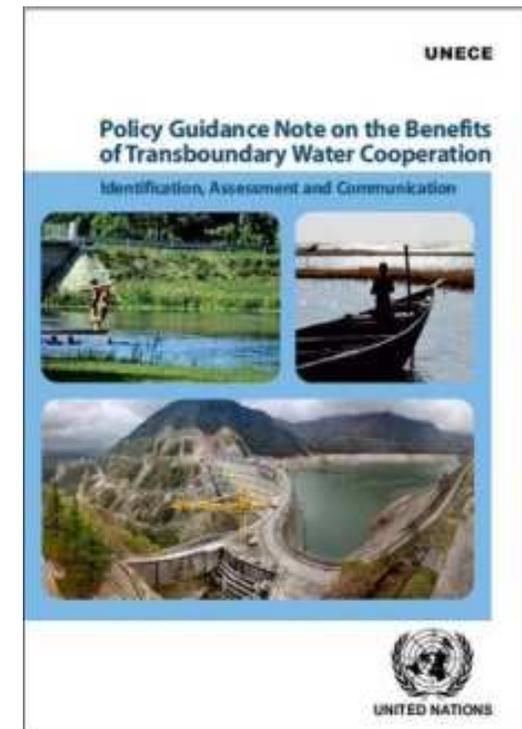
# Programme of work for 2016–2018



# Benefits of transboundary water cooperation



- Policy Guidance Note *Counting our gains: Identifying, Assessing and Communicating the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation*
  - Three-year collaborative process
  - More than 120 experts involved
  - 27 countries represented
- Transboundary water cooperation generates more benefits than usually perceived
- Okavango basin has started a benefits assessment, several other basins are considering applying the Guidance
- Global workshop on benefits assessment planned in 2017 or 2018



	On economic activities	Beyond economic activities
<b>From improved water management</b>	<b>Economic benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded activity and productivity in economic sectors</li> <li>• Reduced cost of carrying out productive activities</li> <li>• Reduced economic impacts of water-related hazards (floods, droughts) ...</li> </ul>	<b>Social and environmental benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health impacts</li> <li>• Employment and reduced poverty impacts</li> <li>• Improved access to services (electricity, water supply..)</li> <li>• Preservation of cultural resources or recreational opportunities.</li> <li>• Avoided/reduced habitat degradation and biodiversity loss</li> </ul>
<b>From enhanced trust</b>	<b>Regional economic cooperation benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of regional markets (for goods, services &amp; labour)</li> <li>• Increase in cross-border investments</li> <li>• Development transnational infrastructure networks</li> </ul>	<b>Peace and security benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening of international law</li> <li>• Increased geopolitical stability</li> <li>• Reduced risk and avoided cost of conflict</li> <li>• Savings from reduced military spending</li> </ul>

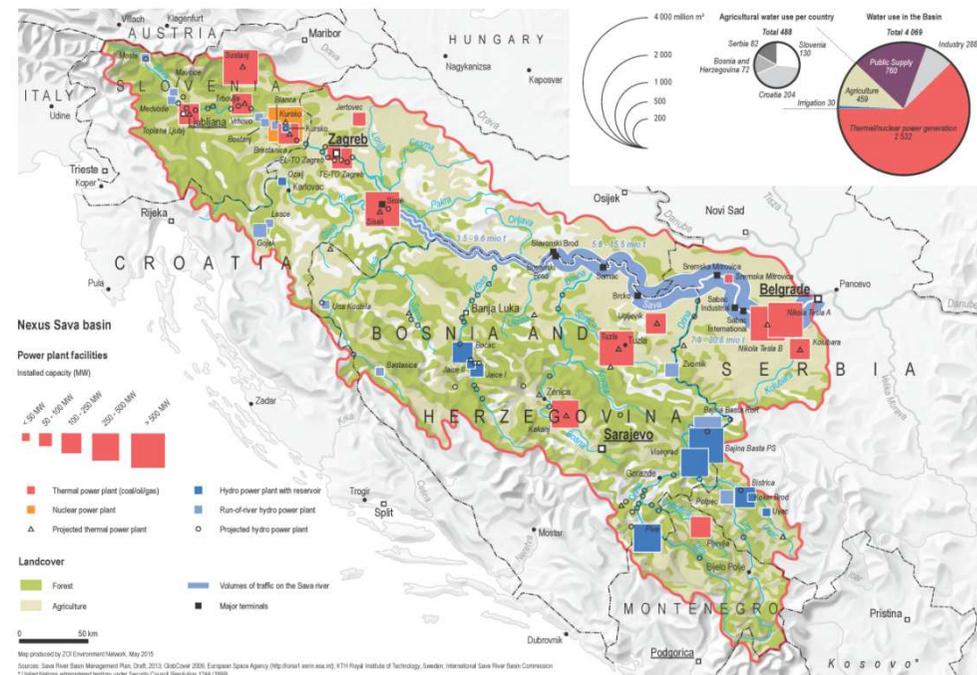
# Assessment of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in a nutshell

- A series of assessments of basins for intersectoral links, trade-offs and benefits. Includes a review of the resource base, resource uses, governance...
  - Objective: 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
  - A methodology developed & successfully applied in the basins Alazani/Ganykh, Sava, Syr Darya, Isonzo/Soča
- > Interest from diverse countries: from the EU to developing countries  
>prepared in close cooperation with and reviewed by the national administrations (capacity building)
- Synthesis publication launched at MOP7
  - Currently an assessment is ongoing in the Drina with emphasis on benefits of cooperation; North-Western Sahara aquifer system to start soon

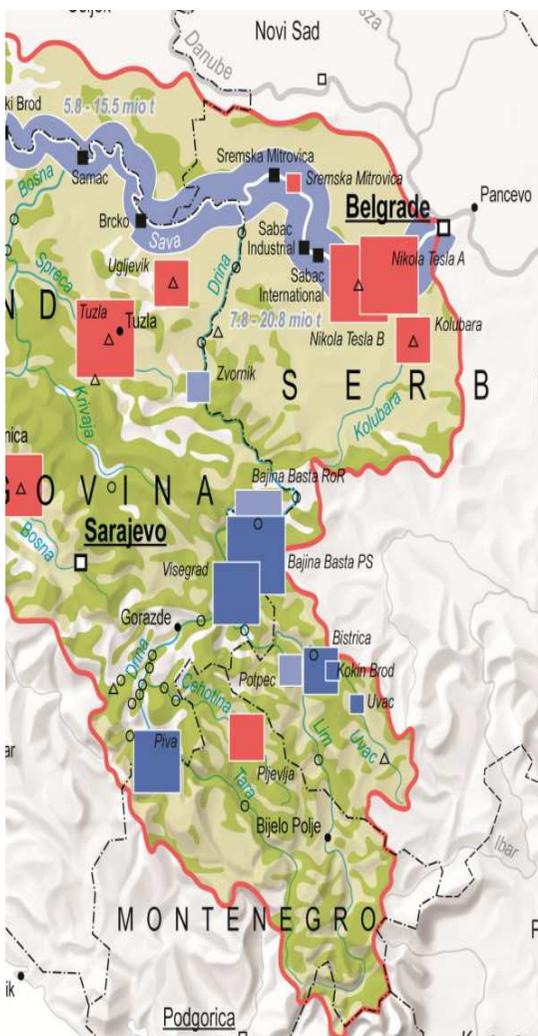


# Why a nexus approach is valuable?

- Commonly, very sectoral resource management (in silos) fails to account for impacts across sectors and on the environment -> friction between sectors and countries, economic losses from inefficiency, sustainability compromised
- Risks to investors: water availability or quality may change unexpectedly due to upstream developments, delays to projects may result from inadequate EIAs, political instability from disputes...
- Conventional assessments do not go far enough and broad enough
- Early sharing of information and consultation on plans allows for consideration of different interests and alternatives. Solutions may come from other sectors.
- Nexus assessment to inform cooperation, policy and decisions for reconciling different resource uses!



# Example: Where are some of the interlinkages in the Drina River Basin?



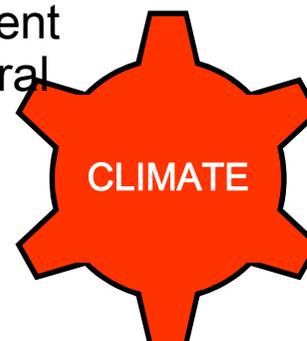
**ECO-SYSTEMS**

How to reconcile, co-optimize?

**ENERGY SECTOR**

**ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, TOURISM**

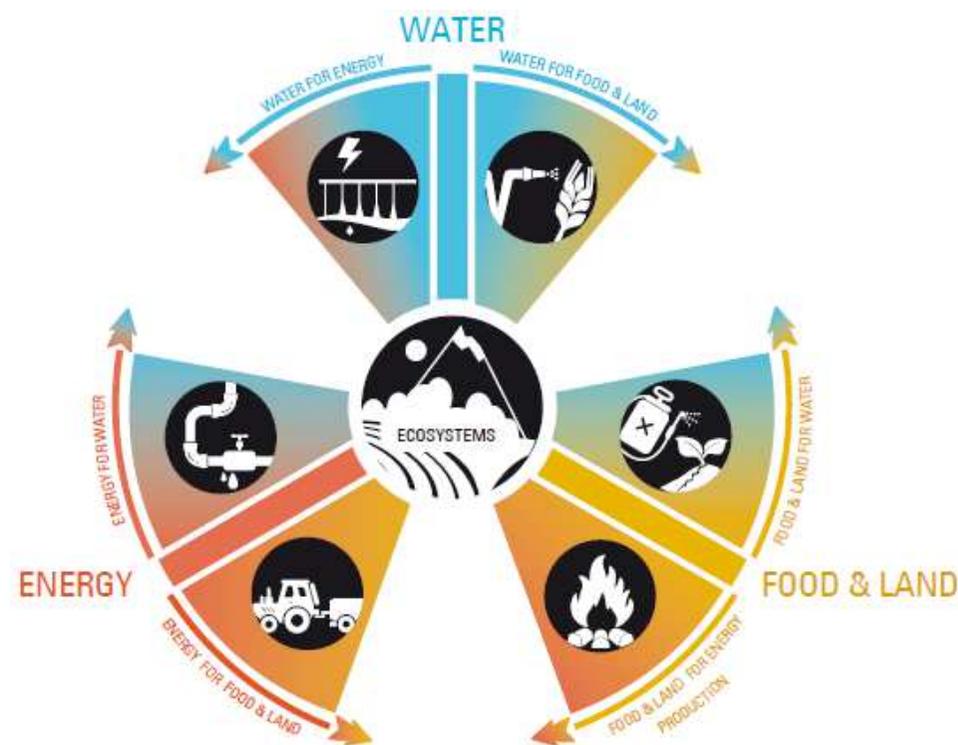
- Nature reserves and protected areas
- Tourism activities relevant for the region
- Rural development needs, agricultural productivity
- Preservation of ecosystems



- Current practice of hydropower operation
- Hydropower expansion in the basin and the role of regional projects
- Foreign investments in the power generation sector (cooperation mechanisms)
- Energy security and added potential for electricity exports

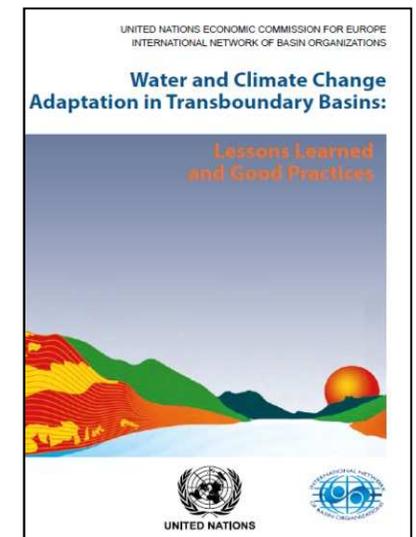
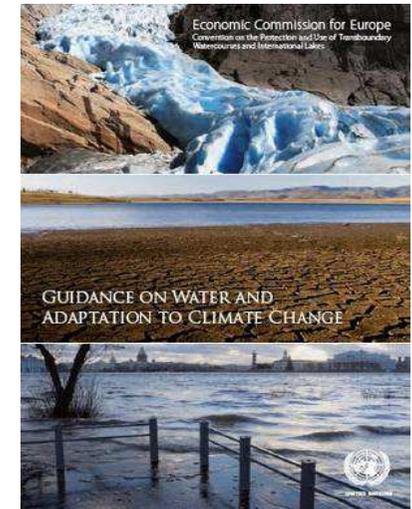
# Main categories of solutions identified

- **Institutions** (intersectoral, multiple level governance, engaging resource users, responsibilities etc.)
- **Information** (multi-sector information to support policy, assessing impacts across sectors, guidelines etc.)
- **Instruments** (economic instruments, SEA etc.)
- **Infrastructure** (built and natural – investments, operation, multiple use designs etc.)
- **International coordination and cooperation** (sharing information, plans, good practices etc.)

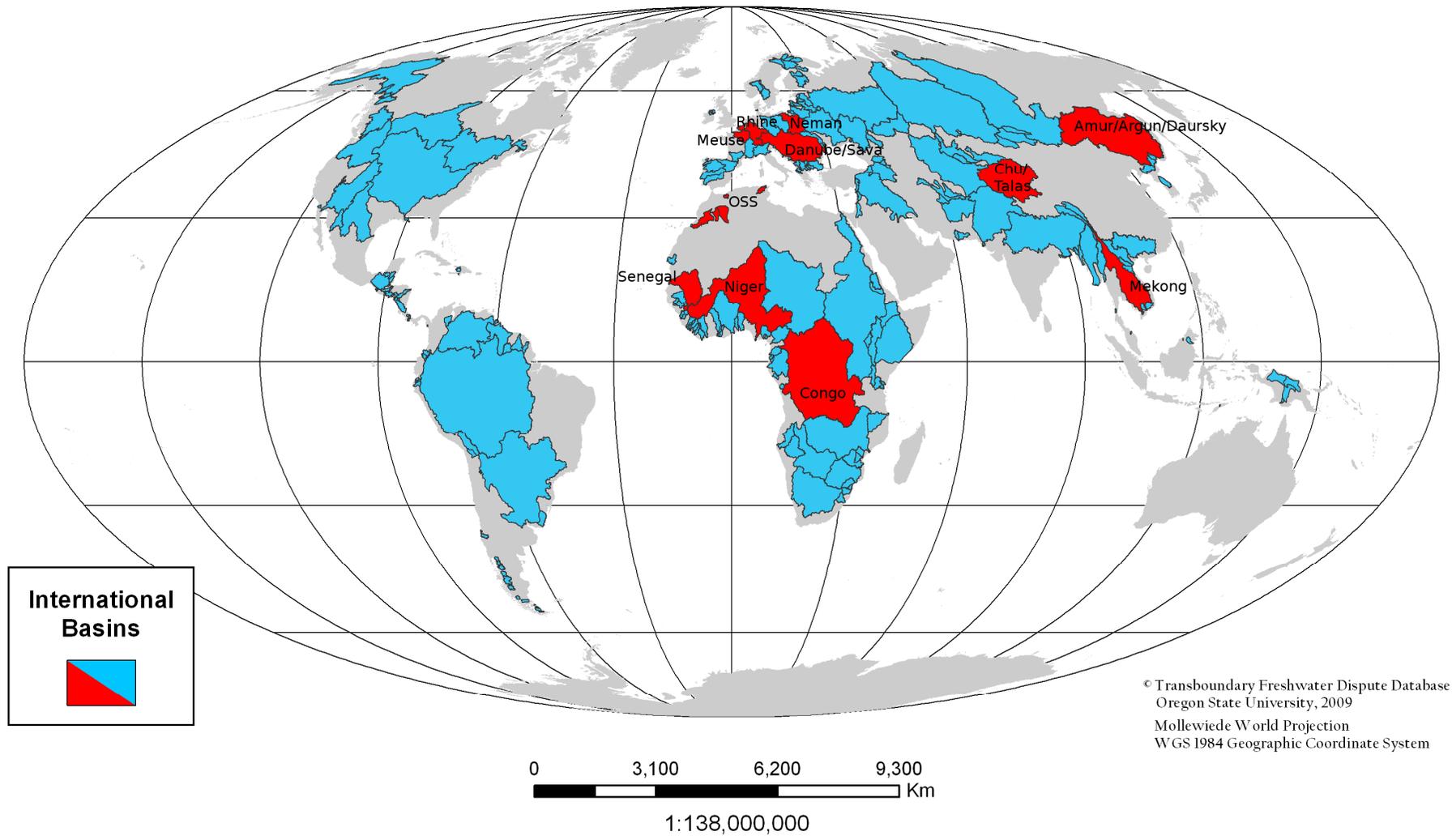


# Achievements on climate change adaptation and flood management

- 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 transboundary flood management
- Programme of **pilot projects** and **global network** of transboundary basins working on climate change (Dniester, Neman, Niger, Congo, Mekong, etc.)



# Global network of basins



## 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 river basin management plan
- Implementation of adaptation measures in 3 areas in the Dniester: monitoring and information exchange, ecosystem restoration and awareness-raising. Reservoir modelling also being done

# Future vision and activities on climate change

- 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, for example, focused on adaptation-mitigation linkages, scenarios, water scarcity and financing
- Replicate and upscale experience from 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.



# Reporting under Water Convention

- Starting with a pilot reporting exercise in 2016/2017, with aims:
  - Provide information on implementation of the Convention
  - Accumulate lessons learned, good practices and experiences
  - Identify emerging issues and difficulties
  - Provide means to enhance basin-specific cooperation
  - Support national implementation of the Convention
  - Provide information to support the mobilization of resources
  
- Reporting template comprises
  1. Transboundary water management at national level: national legislation, economic, financial and technical measures
  2. Questions for each basin (or a group of basins): status and content of agreements and joint bodies, monitoring, flood management, public participation, etc.
  3. Final questions: general verbal comments & technical information

For more information please visit  
[www.unece.org/env/water](http://www.unece.org/env/water)

