

# Governance of Groundwater Resources in Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA)



### Region

Central Asia, Southern Africa, Central America

### Partners

UNESCO-IHP, IUCN

### Background information

decisions based on sound science, and to reach consensus on transboundary governance mechanisms.

### Project target

Strengthen regional stability, cooperation and peace through the establishment of cooperative frameworks for transboundary groundwater governance in River Basin Organizations (RBOs), Regional Commissions (RCs) and selected aquifers systems in Africa, Central America and Central Asia.

### Beneficiaries

Governments at local and national levels, regional organizations, major user groups, population.

### Costs

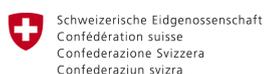
CHF 1,880,000 (SDC)  
CHF 1,000,000 (co-financing)

### Duration

05.2019 – 12.2021

### Contact

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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

The support to this UNESCO-IHP project is part of a broader programme bringing together complementary partnerships, with IUCN working on transboundary surface water, UNESCO-IHP focusing on transboundary groundwater, and the 1992 UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes providing a guiding global framework, altogether building an integrated approach to transboundary waters management.

Groundwater resources are being more and more solicited, among others because they are perceived as the last resort to mitigate climate change impacts, growing water scarcity and surface water pollution. However, these groundwater resources are often less regulated and monitored, being less visible and more difficult to assess. Despite the numerous services they provide for people, the economy and the ecosystems they rely on, groundwater resource management at national and regional level lack data, information, and adequate governance. The GGRETA project aims to address these issues to ensure the protection and sustainable use of groundwater resources through enhanced transboundary groundwater governance.

The project will work on reforming / updating legal, policy and institutional arrangements, strengthening capacities and implementing collective measures at national and regional level to develop sustainable management and governance of transboundary aquifers and associated ecosystems in Africa, Central America and Central Asia. The project includes four inter-linked outcomes:

- Strengthened of institutional and technical capacity on groundwater governance in River Basin Organisations and Regional Commissions, reinforced local stakeholders' participation and countries cooperation of the selected aquifers systems.
- Reinforced regional cooperation, partnerships, and networks, aiming at setting the base for transboundary aquifers regional strategies (special focus on Africa).
- Improved evidence-base and decision-making on transboundary groundwater resources quality protection and monitoring.
- Enhanced communication, public awareness, capacity and skills on transboundary aquifers and shared groundwater resources diplo

Beyond the first focus on improved groundwater governance, the project will aim to achieve a better and more systemic integration of groundwater resources into the water accounting of river basins, countries and regions, as part of a step-by-step approach to enable and foster a more holistic approach to transboundary waters cooperation. This new approach is addressing the sustainability challenges related to transboundary groundwater resources that many river basins are facing. It will help open up new development perspectives and opportunities for coping with the looming threats of climate variability and change, with the need for balancing surface water and groundwater water uses, preventing the risks of large scale groundwater quality degradation, and contribute to the achievement of the SDG 6, in particular indicator 6.5.2 of the Agenda 2030.

The project will:

- replicate and up-scale experiences and approaches applied in two transboundary aquifers (Stampriet in Africa, Ocotepeque-Citala in Central America) under the previous phase, to facilitate structured regional dialogue processes on groundwater resource governance regimes;
- catalyse multistate cooperation to balance conflicting water uses in transboundary surface/groundwater in the basins;
- involve young experts and youth associations and operate to include transboundary groundwater resources management and governance items in the educational programmes;
- Consider innovative processes to enhance transboundary aquifer investments.

The project is linked to, and works in collaboration with, major international networks and strategic partners in the field of transboundary aquifers. The project closely cooperates with organisations and institutions engaged with UNESCO in the global effort to improve transboundary groundwater management, in particular the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations World Water Assessment Programme (UN WWAP), as well as regional Organisations and Economic Commissions.

Additional information: [www.unesco.org/water](http://www.unesco.org/water)