

BRIDGE: Building River Dialogue and Governance



The BRIDGE (Building River Dialogue and Governance) Project aims to build water governance capacities through learning, demonstration, leadership, and consensus-building, in particular in transboundary river basins.

The BRIDGE Project is financed by the Water Diplomacy Programme of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).

BRIDGE will be implemented in 9 transboundary river basins:

- South America
 - Zarumilla river (Ecuador-Peru)
 - Catamayo-Chira river (Ecuador-Peru)
 - Lake Titicaca basin (Peru-Bolivia)
- Mesoamerica
 - Coatan river (Mexico-Guatemala)
 - Goascoran river (Honduras-El Salvador)
 - Sixaola river (Costa Rica-Panama)
- Mekong region
 - Sekong (Vietnam-Lao PDR-Cambodia)
 - Sre Pok (Vietnam-Cambodia)
 - Sesan River (Vietnam-Cambodia)

What is water governance?

Water governance sets the 'rules of the game' for the way water is managed. It determines how, or even whether, sustainable water resource management is implemented. Poor water governance results in degradation and over-allocation of water resources, is a cause of vulnerability for poor people and loss of biodiversity, and leads to weaker and less resilient livelihoods and economic growth.

Water governance is organised according to policy, laws and institutions in a country. In transboundary basins, good water governance requires the countries sharing waters to cooperate.

Water Governance Demonstrations Catalyse Solutions

'Water Governance Capacity' is how well a society is able to implement effective water management

through transparent, coherent and cost-efficient policy, law and institutions. 'Water Governance Capacity' is built most effectively where stakeholders participate and it is coordinated from local to national and transboundary levels. In practical terms, building 'Water Governance Capacity' takes place through integration of:

- consensus building in multi-stakeholder dialogues and forums;
- learning, capacity building and knowledge exchange among decision-makers and stakeholders;
- support for national policy, legal and institutional reforms;
- demonstration of tangible benefits for local, national or river basin level priorities for development;
- support for confidence building, cooperation, dialogue and agreements among countries sharing transboundary basins.

The BRIDGE project will use these approaches to catalyse transboundary cooperation, for better water security and faster progress on for example safe water supply and sanitation, ecosystem management and water resources development that is sustainable.



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About IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. It supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world and brings governments, non-government organizations, United Nations agencies, companies and local communities together to develop and implement policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network - a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by more than 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. The Union's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, Switzerland.

Expected results:

- Transboundary governance reforms are implemented
- Negotiation and understanding of water governance and sharing benefits are improved in 9 watersheds
- New multi-stakeholders platforms, including the voice of the poor, are established
- Cooperation mechanisms trialled and strengthened, including data exchange, technical coordination and joint planning
- Water charters and transboundary codes-of-conduct are implemented
- Trust between stakeholders is fostered and is the basis of good transboundary relationships and conflict prevention

Results and tools from the BRIDGE project will be used to promote implementation of improved water governance and transboundary cooperation in the 3 participating regions – the Andes, Mesoamerica and Mekong. Lessons learned will be shared globally to support applications in other key transboundary hot spots for water diplomacy.

Background information

The toolkits from the WANI governance series, which include *SHARE – Managing Water Across Borders*, *NEGOTIATE – Reaching Agreements over Water*, and *RULE – Reforming Water Resource Governance*, are reference publications and guidance for learning and capacity-building throughout the course of the project.

The WANI toolkits can be downloaded from the IUCN Publications website:

www.iucn.org/knowledge/publications_doc