



Water, Energy, Transport

Transboundary water resources management

The challenge

Water knows no political boundaries. More than 250 water catchment areas worldwide are shared by more than two states. Forty per cent of the world's population lives on transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwater reservoirs. As water becomes ever scarcer – as it will in many places as a result of climate change – competition between countries wanting to access and use transboundary waters increases. Large-scale development projects on the upper reaches of a river may significantly affect water availability further downstream. Increasingly, therefore, water is a cause of conflict in bilateral or multilateral relations and it often represents an obstacle to economic cooperation. The challenge is to support cooperation between states on transboundary waters in ways that promote peace and sustainable development in the region.

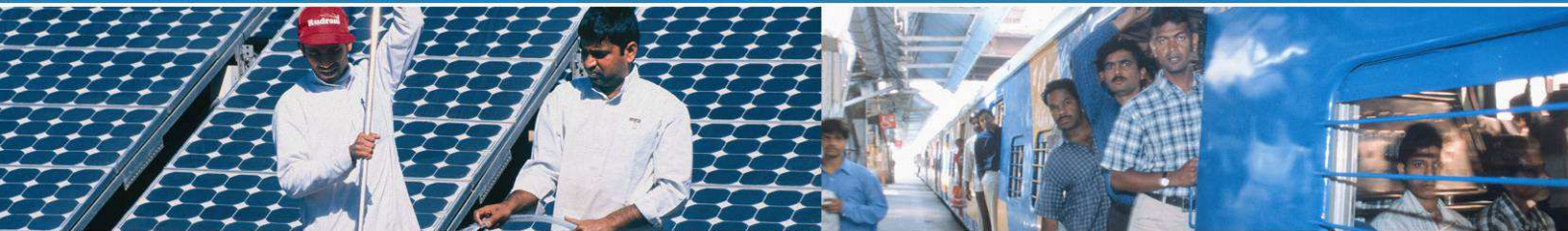
Our approach

Agreements on transboundary water management create a framework that prevents unilateral overuse of water resources by one state at the expense of others. Cooperation can lead to win-win solutions, for example if it creates a basis for investment or management projects in such fields as energy generation from hydropower, water supply and irrigation, navigation, prevention of water pollution and flood management. GIZ supports its partner countries in setting up and developing appropriate transboundary water management institutions that also promote economic cooperation. We advise on the harmonisation of national water policies and on local and regional water resources management. To create synergies, next to national governments, we also advise local stakeholders and river basin organisations but also regional organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This enables international water cooperation to be institutionally anchored by means of treaties or guidelines.

Our services

Our advisory services for riparian states address the political, the organisational and the technical level. The modules comprise:

- **Organisational advice:** GIZ advises its partners on founding and developing regional institutions with a focus on water management. Together we define tasks, roles and responsibilities. We help existing organisations develop further; in particular, we promote mutual cooperation.
- **Strategy development:** We support our partners in drawing up regional water management plans. Our advice follows the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).
- **Information and knowledge management:** Our advice ranges from needs analysis and strategy development to technical implementation, the creation of suitable management structures and intergovernmental data-sharing agreements. We train specialist staff in methods of collecting, preparing and exchanging water management information.
- **Policy advice:** GIZ offers support both in adapting national water laws and guidelines to international agreements and in harmonising national water policies in the region.
- **Establishing trust and exchanging experience:** GIZ promotes the establishment of trust between riparian states and the exchange of experience between practitioners of water catchment management through dialogue platforms and processes.



The benefits

Our partner countries benefit in a wide range of ways from our services. Successful cooperation ventures on trans-boundary waters serve as a catalyst for joint water resources management projects that boost regional economic development. Cooperation creates trust and reduces misunderstanding. Effective institutions and skilled personnel promote the sustainable development, distribution and use of water resources. In all our services the quality of our work is based on our long international experience in water management and fostering cooperation.

An example from the field

Acting on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ is supporting SADC in the sustainable management and development of its transboundary surface and groundwater resources. This strengthens the integrative, peace-promoting role that water plays in cooperation between the 15 SADC member states. In recent years SADC has made major progress in this respect and this is now to be consolidated.

This is all the more important in view of the fact that the region's main water resources are now largely exhausted, particularly in the areas that serve as locomotives of economic growth in the region (South Africa, Botswana, Namibia). Moreover, all the forecasts predict that the highly variable precipitation in the region will be affected further as a result of climate change. In the medium to long term this could result in tension and conflict over increasingly scarce water resources, thereby threatening economic and social development.

In the area covered by the SADC states there are 15 trans-boundary river basins. The promotion of intergovernmental cooperation must therefore be a priority. The primary aim is to sustainably manage and develop the available water resources.

We are supporting the development of the SADC secretariat in Botswana and important subsidiary river basin organisations. This approach has recently been extended to include a third level, namely local water authorities in member states.

A further priority area is the elaboration of river-basin-wide development and management plans based on the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

These plans are drawn up in cooperation with other donors. As a result of this, the British Department for International Development (DFID) has entered into a delegated cooperation with GIZ.

Local pilot projects later serve as a model for other border regions. A successful example is the Kunene water supply project on the border between Namibia and Angola, in which GIZ is supporting setting up and the organisational development of the newly established water authority on the Angolan side.

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Imprint

Published by:
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Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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