

# Water Diplomacy and Governance in Key Trans-boundary Hot Spots

## Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) – Phase 3



**Region**  
Global

**Partners**  
IUCN

### Background information

Transboundary water bodies create hydrological, social and economic interdependencies between societies. While incorporating a potential for competition and conflict, they also provide opportunities for cooperation.

### Project objective

Poverty alleviation, nature conservation and economic growth are enhanced in target basins through sustainable management and governance of transboundary water resources

### Beneficiaries

National government institutions and agencies, municipal and provincial level governments, basin organizations, local communities, businesses and civil society

**Costs**  
CHF 4,800,000

**Duration**  
01.2016 – 12.2018

**Contact**  
Global Programme Water  
water@eda.admin.ch

BRIDGE supports the capacities of stakeholders from local to transboundary levels in countries sharing river or lake basins to design and implement effective water management arrangements through a shared vision, benefit-sharing principles and transparent and coherent institutional frameworks. BRIDGE is implemented in five regions through demonstration at basin-level, learning support, dialogue facilitation, leadership development, and the provision of advice and technical support.

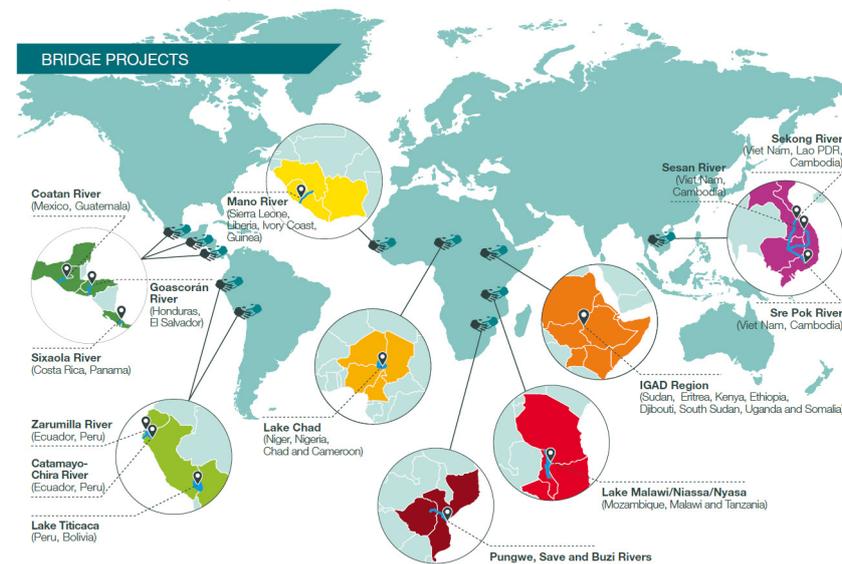
With over 40% of the world's population living in 275 transboundary basins, cooperation over water management is essential for people's well-being, political stability and the sustainability of ecosystems. Today, the complexities of sharing water among States require innovation relative to traditional approaches to water governance, calling for improved water diplomacy across multiple levels.

The goal of BRIDGE is to enhance cooperation among riparian countries through the use of water diplomacy in order to increase the socio-economic, environmental and political benefits derived from water. Cooperation among countries in the management of transboundary waters is a building block of international security and regional stability. Likewise, water management is also a local activity because clean, safe and dependable water is intrinsic to health, food security and economic opportunities. The costs of failing to manage water are often reflected in poverty, disease, loss of biodiversity, conflict and instability.

The BRIDGE strategy aims at catalysing sustainable water resources development, including progress on safe water supply, sustainable watershed management and biodiversity conservation. It is based on the principles that demonstrations on the ground are necessary to test how to make cooperation operational, and that in order to build the necessary dialogues to make cooperation a reality that catalyzes change, it is necessary to use capacity development and learning as a vehicle and leaders as agents of change. Support facilities: provide advice on demand to governments and stakeholders on water governance.

The adoption of new global frameworks – the UNWC, globalization of the UNECE Convention and adoption of the SDGs – motivate increased efforts to operationalize cooperation mechanisms. At the same time, strengthening water governance capacities across levels and physical and institutional boundaries requires improvements in coordination. This can be achieved by strengthening institutions, mobilizing multi-level stakeholder dialogues that include civil society, municipalities, the private sector and ministries, and multiplying the results from BRIDGE by influencing other basins through scaling up activities.

Based on these needs, phase 3 of BRIDGE integrates the three original regions (Andes, Mesoamerica and the Mekong) with five additional hotspots in three regions of Africa (West and Central Africa, Southern Africa and Horn of Africa).



Transboundary basins supported by BRIDGE for demonstration actions for improvements in water governance

Additional information:  
[www.iucn.org/bridge](http://www.iucn.org/bridge)  
<http://waterlawandgovernance.org>  
<http://3sbasin.org>