BRIDGE: Building River Dialogue and Governance

Securing sustainable development, livelihoods and peace through transboundary water cooperation


Credit: shutterstock_1444706513

IUCN, with partners, have the past decade implemented transboundary river governance and dialogue through BRIDGE in over twenty river and lake basins worldwide.

The fifth phase of BRIDGE (2022-2027) will consolidate knowledge and expertise from previous phases to mobilise key ongoing negotiation processes where IUCN acts as dialogue broker to foster multi-scale transboundary agreements and strengthen institutions.

BRIDGE 5

Activities will be structured around four programme-wide outcomes that prioritise what BRIDGE will achieve at the end of the next four years.

To maximise impact from BRIDGE 5 these programme outcomes will then be aligned with the five strategic priorities outlined below in the operational framework and link these to specific regions and basins.

1. Shared water agreements and institutions are strengthened to ensure informed and inclusive participation, recognising the inter-sectoral nature of water resources management.

2. Financial sustainability is an integral part of planning and delivery of transboundary water governance and management, contributing to fit-for-purpose institutions and diversified financing streams.

3. Benefit sharing agreements are applied and implemented, resulting in equitable economic, environmental and social benefits for a range of stakeholders at local level.

4. The role of women and young people in decision-making and integrated water resources management for transboundary basins is recognised and enhanced, though, for example, improved access to knowledge and finance.

BRIDGE'S OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The overall goal of the programme:
Effective institutions in transboundary basins enable sustainable management of water resources and contribute to long-term security and blue peace.



1. Shared water agreements and institutions are strenghtened

The promotion of transboundary water agreements has been a key outcome and component of BRIDGE since its inception. To be successful, the agreements, as well as their governance and management require the involvement of different stakeholders at multiple levels and sectors including political decision makers, diplomats, government technical officers, local communities, civil society, indigenous peoples, women, youth, academia, and the private sector.

Finding answers to challenges in shared waters relies on informed dialogue where all stakeholders need to have the adequate capacities, skills, knowledge and expertise to develop solutions. This outcome seeks to provide the necessary tools to ensure effective, informed, consulted and participative dialogues to strengthen shared water agreements and institutions.

2. Financial sustainability is an integral part of planning and delivery

Achieving financial sustainability in transboundary basins require up-front planning and diversifying the financial sources to reduce reliance on public and development funding. BRIDGE will support the development of local and regional pipeline development for sustainable finance through building financial sustainability upfront into the design of transboundary arrangements, making it a goal of cooperation agreements as well as an integral component of transboundary institutions.

Linking with outcome 3, BRIDGE will qualify and quantify the benefits of transboundary cooperation, demonstrating the economic multiplier that peaceful water management provides. Lastly, this phase will prepare strategies for de-risking investment in transboundary basins and develop bankable investments, engaging private sector and local level investors.



Lake Titicaca Workshop (Credit: IUCN / Martin Calisto)

3. Benefit sharing agreements

Benefit sharing enables a basin-wide planning perspective, bringing together basin stakeholders to enhance coordination in the management and development, as well as providing greater scope for optimising resource use.

BRIDGE will be rolling out and piloting the Benefit Sharing Methodology through a multi-dimensional approach, looking at 1) capacity building that strengthens understanding and support for benefit sharing in target basins, and; 2) real application in terms of developing and negotiating benefit sharing agreements in selected basins where there is an appetite for this.



IUCN Chilkasari FDG with Women (Credit: Haseeb Md Irfanullah)

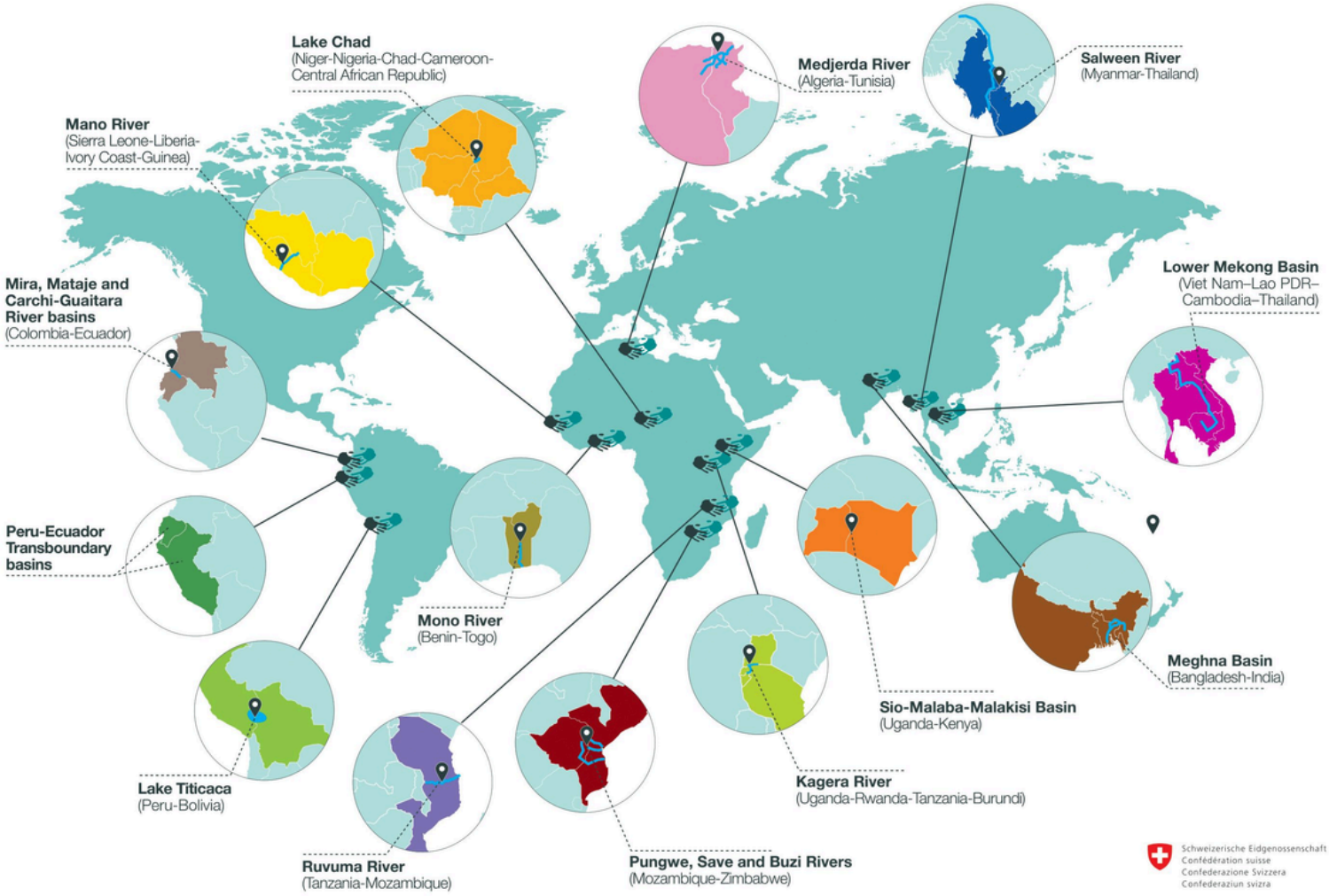
4. The role of women and young people in decision-making and integrated water resources management

Beyond participation, empowering women and youth to bring their perspectives, knowledge and experiences, contributes to diversify and innovate the solutions needed to attain water security goals.

Building on work on women and youth leadership in previous phases of BRIDGE, and closely aligned with IUCN's new Youth Strategy and the Dutch-funded Youth Journey Initiative, the programme will aim to build a network of future and female leaders to advocate and mobilise transboundary cooperation across the BRIDGE basins and beyond.

TRANSBOUNDARY WATER GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME

Areas of Work 2022-2027



CROSS-SECTORAL AND INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

BRIDGE works to establish links and collaborations at all levels, from the global level, where we already work with several international actors such as UNECE through the promotion of the UN Water Courses Convention, to the regional level where we work with regional economic commissions, such as the South African Development Cooperation (SADC), the national level where we work directly with national authorities, and the local level where we work with River and Lake Basin Organisations, stakeholder organisations and municipalities.

Do you wish to find out more about BRIDGE, our work and look for possible ways to work together, please get in touch with one our BRIDGE coordinators in your region, or through the contact details below.

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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

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Further information

BRIDGE website:
www.waterandnature.org/initiatives/bridge

Water Law and Governance website:
www.waterlawandgovernance.org/bridge/

LinkedIn:
IUCN Water and Wetlands

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