



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
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Water for Cooperation

Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross Sectoral Cooperation, including Scientific Cooperation, and Water Across the 2030 Agenda

In the context of the [2023 UN Water Conference](#), this Information Brief highlights some of IUCN's contributions to water-related issues, focusing on the specific themes that will be treated under the [interactive dialogue on Water for Cooperation](#).

What is the UN Water Conference interactive dialogue on “[Water for Cooperation](#)” about?

The interactive dialogue will explore the current status, challenges, interlinkages, and opportunities for progress, including transformative solutions, related to water cooperation. The discussion will consider the necessary actions to accelerate progress and to have arrangements for water cooperation in place for all transboundary rivers, lakes, and aquifers by 2030. It will also consider possible transformative solutions that will help implement inclusive and cross-sectoral multilevel governance arrangements in support of integrated water resources management. Finally, the dialogue will address the different means through which synergies between climate action and water cooperation can be enhanced.

How does IUCN contribute to this topic through its [Nature 2030 Programme](#)?

IUCN is committed to act so that [by 2030, freshwater systems support and sustain biodiversity and human needs](#). To achieve this ambition, IUCN champions policy, regulatory frameworks, and action for freshwater systems that integrate across transnational, national, and local scales. Such frameworks are forward-looking, targeting climate change resilience and long-term water security for

both people and nature. Trade-offs in water allocation are negotiated openly and fairly using established hydro-diplomacy frameworks.

Furthermore, IUCN supports stakeholder dialogues to forge strong and diverse partnerships, governance reforms, and collaboration across borders, sectors, and scales. It builds capacities to challenge conventional, deterministic, and sectorally-limited approaches and assumptions regarding water resource management.

Finally, IUCN recognizes and promotes Indigenous knowledge and intrinsic values, diverse stakeholder rights, and the spiritual and cultural values of rivers and wetlands in national policies. It fosters integrative, inclusive and adaptive governance of water resources.

How does IUCN contribute through its Resolutions?

Over the years, IUCN Members have adopted numerous [Resolutions and Recommendations](#) related to water, water governance and cooperation. Several Resolutions¹ adopted at the last World Conservation Congress in Marseille in 2021 address water cooperation. [Resolution 7.013](#) seeks to support the lower Mekong Basin countries with the transboundary management of water resources, and asks IUCN to work with relevant stakeholders to strengthen partnerships within the region. [Resolution 7.014](#) highlights the importance of a cross-border approach to prioritize adaptation to climate change and risk management in the Rio de la Plata Basin, while [Resolution 7.015](#) requests IUCN to contribute to strengthening the governance of transboundary

¹ IUCN Resolutions constitute the body of its general policy. They are adopted at the World Conservation Congress every four years through an open consultative process of IUCN's 1,400+ Members (including governments, NGOs, and Indigenous peoples' organisations), and thereby reflect and promote the priorities of the global conservation community.



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waters through information sharing and capacity-building, and to promote cooperative, equitable, and sustainable management of transboundary waters. Finally, [Resolution 7.052](#) presents general ideas and principles on the management systems for transboundary waters, including that they should be used in an equitable, reasonable, and optimal manner, and that the principles of “profit sharing” and “eliminating damage within the framework of joint responsibility” should be followed.

What is IUCN doing concretely on this matter?

IUCN is implementing numerous activities and projects that aim to support better water cooperation. For instance, IUCN is co-leading the [Shared Waters Cooperation Facility](#), a global platform that supports more effective and sustainable transboundary water cooperation in basins where obstacles to cooperation exist.

IUCN is also currently implementing the [BRIDGE programme](#), which works towards building river dialogue and governance in transboundary river basins. The programme works at the interface of hydro-diplomacy and local governance to promote new approaches in transboundary water management. This includes engaging riverine states to negotiate fair water sharing agreements, building inclusive governance processes to ensure equitable benefit sharing of water resources, and engaging to

enable transboundary water institutions to become financially sustainable.

Further, IUCN is a member of the [Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition](#), which supports cooperation on policy, governance, capacity development, technical support, and finance in the context of the [Water Action Agenda](#) and SDG 6.

When it comes to fostering inclusion in governance processes, the IUCN-led [Valuing Water Youth Journey](#) seeks to support young people to overcome barriers in the water sector so that youth priorities, initiatives, and ideas are fully integrated into water governance and management.

Finally, IUCN is an Implementing Agency to the GEF for a range of international waters transboundary projects covering a diverse set of river basins and aquifers. This portfolio continues to grow, working hand-in-hand with BRIDGE to ensure that river basin organizations are invested in both governance and practical action on the ground.

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