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Intergovernmental
Hydrological Programme

Second Announcement

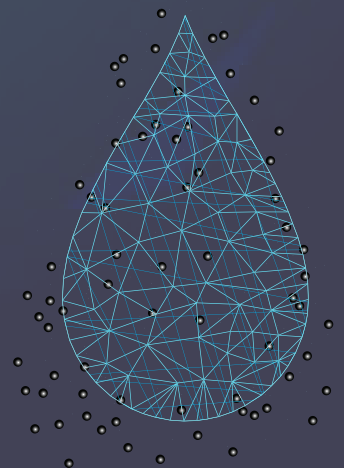
ISARM2021 2nd International Conference

TRANSBOUNDARY AQUIFERS

Challenges and the way forward

6-9 December 2021
Online conference

REGISTER



BACKGROUND

In June 2000, in recognition of the importance of transboundary aquifer systems as a key source of freshwater in particular regions of the world, notably those located in arid and semi-arid zones, the 14th Session of the Intergovernmental Council of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) adopted a Resolution launching an initiative, entitled "**International Shared Aquifer Resources Management (ISARM)**". The aim of this initiative was to promote studies of transboundary aquifers and enhance cooperation amongst regional and international institutions. The first phase of the ISARM programme was dedicated to compiling a global inventory of transboundary aquifers.

During this period, substantial efforts were made to identify transboundary aquifers (TBAs) across the world, and to raise awareness of their societal and environmental importance. In 2008, the UN International Law Commission adopted a set of 19 Draft Articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers and submitted them to the UN General Assembly (UNGA). In view of the ILC's report, UNGA adopted a series of Resolutions. The resolution adopted in 2019 ([A/RES/74/193](#)) "commends to the attention of Governments the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers annexed... as guidance for bilateral or regional agreements and arrangements for the proper management of transboundary aquifers".

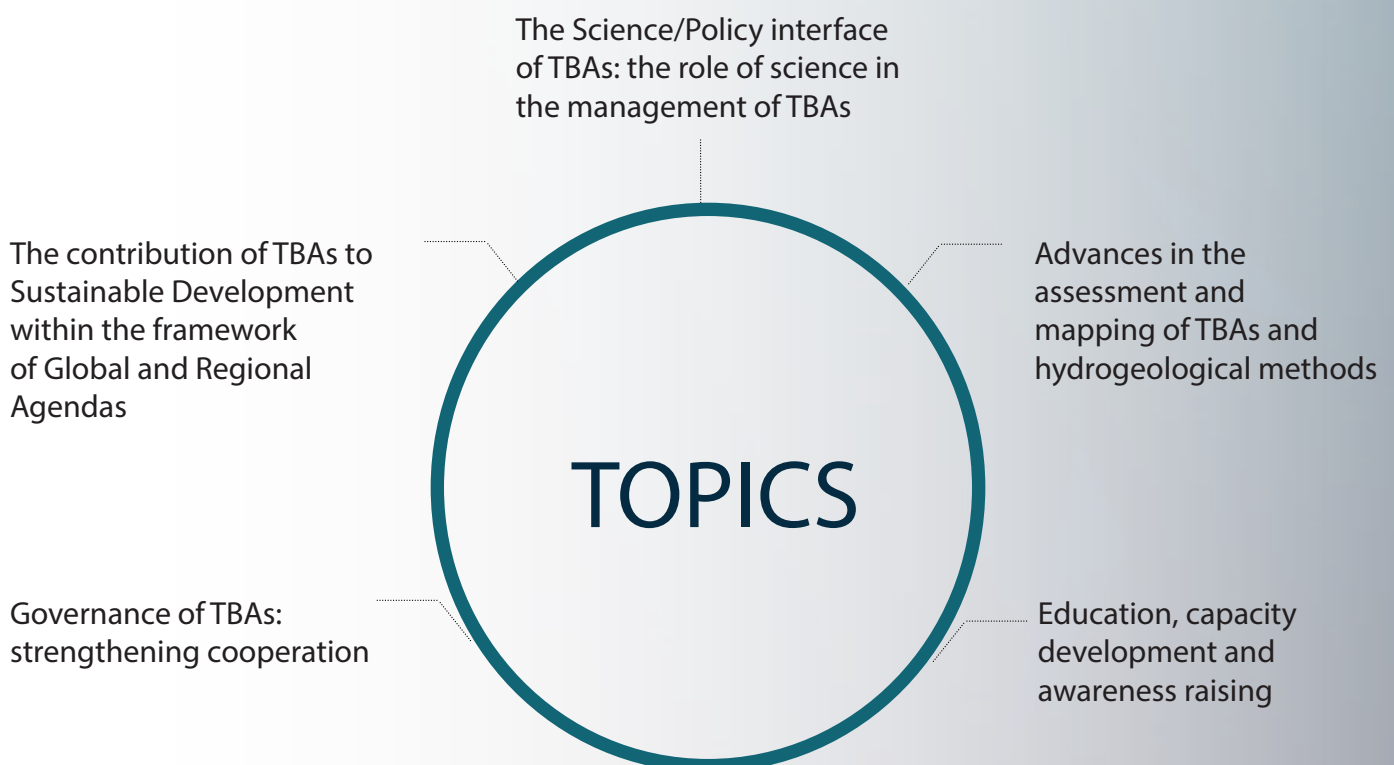
UNESCO organized the 1st ISARM Conference in 2010 under the theme 'Transboundary Aquifers Management'. As a follow up in 2015, UNESCO and the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), a UNESCO category 2 centre, published the [Transboundary Aquifers of the World Map](#).

ISARM2021 will evaluate the progress made by the international community over the past 10 years, considering new challenges and lessons learned, as well as best practices and successful policies, and will compile effective recommendations for practical and operational issues related to TBAs. Debates taking place during the conference will contribute to a better understanding of how to manage this shared but invisible resource.

At the interface between science and policy, this online conference aims to facilitate and inspire dialogue and knowledge sharing, as well as science-based solutions for the sustainable management of transboundary aquifers resources.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide the opportunity to present an **update of the world inventory of transboundary aquifers**, since the publishing by UNESCO of the Transboundary Aquifers of the World Map in 2015.
- Bring together **experts in transboundary aquifers management** to discuss concepts and approaches for sound management within various contexts, in both developed and developing countries.
- Facilitate the **exchange of ideas** regarding new directions in transboundary aquifer management, as well as **recommendations** for the formulation of new strategies and implementation tools, such as guidelines and educational resources.
- Consider the **contribution of the principles of international law regarding the sustainable management of transboundary aquifers** and dependent ecosystems, as well as evaluate the legal and institutional advances and issues arising from recent practices of formal and informal agreements between countries.
- **Highlight progress achieved** through the first and second reporting cycles in the monitoring of transboundary aquifers within the framework of SDG 6, indicator 6.5.2.
- **Contribute to the development of educational initiatives on transboundary water cooperation** and develop sustainable practices and guidance tools on shared water resources management and negotiations.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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R. Sanchez (IAH TBA Commission)
R. Stephan (IWRA)
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Scientific Committee

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H. Zaisheng (University of Geosciences, China)
I. Zavadsky (ICPDR)
M. Zeitoun (University of East Anglia)

Main conference partners

ISARM2021 is a contribution to the UN Global Accelerator Framework.



The conference is organized in coordination with UNECE as a contribution to the monitoring of the SDG6 indicator 6.5.2.



With the technical and scientific contribution of the UNESCO IGRAC category 2 centre.



In partnership with:



(* With the sad and sudden passing of Dr Ralf Klingbeil earlier this year, UNESCO-IHP is reminded of Ralf's personal and professional commitment to groundwater studies and to the ISARM2021 programme.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME*

| | December 6th | | December 7th | | December 8th | | December 9th | |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|---|---------------------|---|------------------------------|
| | Room I | Room II | Room I | Room II | Room I | Room II | Room I | Room II |
| 10:00 - 10:45 | | | Panel I : TBA contributions to SDGs | | Panel IV : Cooperation for the sustainable governance of TBAs | | Oral Presentations | Break / Poster Presentations |
| 10:45 - 12:30 | | | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | | Oral Presentations |
| | | | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | |
| | | | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | |
| 12:30 - 13:30 | | | Break / Poster Presentations | | Break / Poster Presentations | | Break / Poster Presentations | |
| 13:30 - 14:15 | | | Panel II : Science/Policy interface in the TBAs context | | Panel V : Draft Articles on the Law of TBAs | | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations |
| 14:15 - 16:00 | | | Opening Ceremony | | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations |
| | | | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations |
| | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | |
| 16:00 - 17:00 | High Level Panel | | Break / Poster Presentations | | Break / Poster Presentation | | Panel VII : Progress and challenges in cooperation in the Iberoamerica region | |
| 17:00 - 18:45 | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Panel III : Building a pragmatic approach to TBA assessment | | Panel VI : TBAs in regions of the world | | Closing Ceremony | |
| | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | Oral Presentations | | |
| | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | Flash Presentations | | |
| | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A | Q&A |

*Times are in CET

ISARM2021 PANEL SESSIONS

High Level Panel

A call to action from a new generation of young professionals highlights the need for consensus at international level when building cooperation around the sharing of water resources. A specially selected group of High-Level panellists will discuss both the importance of groundwater resources for the survival of the planet and the main challenges impeding effective management and governance of Transboundary Aquifers.

Moderated by Alice Aureli, Chief Groundwater Systems and Settlements Section, Division of Water Sciences, UNESCO

Panel I: Transboundary Aquifers contributions to SDGs

How improved cooperation, sustainable management and governance of transboundary aquifers can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs (Highlights from the indicator 6.5.2 monitoring process).

Moderated by Federico Properzi, Chief Technical Advisor, UN-Water management team

Panel II: Science/Policy interface in the TBAs context

The focus of this panel will be on bridging the science-policy interface for informed decisions in policy-making.

Moderated by Alfonso Rivera, Chair IAH-Transboundary Aquifers Commission

Panel III: Building a pragmatic approach to TBA assessment

A reasonable knowledge of a TBA as a whole is generally required to manage it properly. However, the identification of hot-spots and priority areas of a particular aquifer may be all that is necessary. The panel will discuss how to develop a pragmatic approach to Transboundary aquifer assessment.

Moderated by Neno Kukurić, Director, IGRAC

Panel IV: Cooperation for the sustainable governance of TBAs

The panel will focus on the governance of transboundary aquifers. It will address the key challenges transboundary aquifers are currently facing and will be facing in the future and explores options for cooperation between riparian states to achieve sustainable governance.

Moderated by Susanne Schmeier, Associate Professor in Water Law and Diplomacy at IHE Delft, The Netherlands

Panel V: Draft Articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers—Do they hold water?

A roundtable discussion will discuss the value of the Draft Articles; how nations should perceive the Draft Articles; and whether, how, and for what purpose the Draft Articles might be usefully employed.

Moderated by Gabriel Eckstein, Professor at the Texas A&M University School of Law

Panel VI: TBAs in regions of the world

The panel will present four case studies:
 - Strengthening the governance of TBAs in the Mekong region
 - The Latin American engagement on TBAs and the Guarani aquifer
 - Stampriet Aquifer, Southern Africa - UNESCO GGRETA Project
 - A case of regional cooperation in the DIKTAS Aquifer

Moderated by Christina Fraser, Researcher, IGRAC

Panel VII: Progress and challenges in cooperation on transboundary water management in the Iberoamerica region

In 2021, the work of the Conference of Ibero-American Water Directors (CODIA) has focused on the implementation of SDG Indicator 6.5.2 on cooperation in transboundary waters management. The conclusions of the work carried out will be presented during the panel session. National Water Directors from different countries from the region will be invited to share their experiences and identify opportunities to advance and accelerate transboundary cooperation, and to formulate concrete recommendations for policy makers, water managers and custodian agencies for the SDG Indicator 6.5.2.

Organized by **UNESCO-IHP** and **Conferencia de Directores Iberoamericanos del Agua (CODIA)**

Moderated by Manuel Menéndez Prieto, Special Advisor, Cabinet of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, Spain; and Vice-Chair of the UNESCO-IHP Council

Registration link: <https://en.unesco.org/conference/isarm2021/registration>



- No registration fees are required to participate in this Conference
- The languages of the Conference are English and French

More information is available on the UNESCO-IHP website:

<https://en.unesco.org/conference/isarm2021>

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