Water allocation in a transboundary context: gathering worldwide experience for the Global Handbook

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Workshop on enhancing transboundary water cooperation in the MENA region
Beirut, 3-4 March 2020

UNECE

What's water allocation in a transboundary context?

Water allocation:

→Allocation over time of water resources between and within different sectors and for different uses

→One of the biggest challenges in water management and protection.

In **transboundary context**, increasing competition over water resources between countries driven by growing water scarcity and increasing water use, makes water allocation ever more relevant to ensure sustainable development and the prevention of risks of political tensions and conflicts.

Development of a handbook on water allocation in the transboundary context

Work will start with a global review of water allocation arrangements in transboundary basins.

The publication will include references to relevant tools & information resources & examples of:

(a) prerequisites (e.g., institutional framework, data sharing) for agreeing on water allocations;

(b) options and approaches that can be followed technically and legally;

(c) relevant considerations in designing a process to agree on water allocation; and

(d) the benefits that can be drawn from agreeing on water allocation.

The experience in implementing existing allocation arrangements will be taken into account.

The development of the handbook will be supported by an *Expert Group* which will meet three times to provide strategic advice, expert insights and guidance on the structure, content and key thematic areas.

A minimum of two, possibly three, regional workshops are being organised to collect regional feedback, share case studies and lessons learned. The first one is in May in Budapest, the second one is in Almaty in July. Third one is TBC.

Handbook on Transboundary Water Allocation

- **AUDIENCE**

The handbook's primary audience will be **government officials, basin authorities and water sector practitioners** working at different levels (local, national, inter-governmental) of governance of shared rivers, lakes and aquifers.

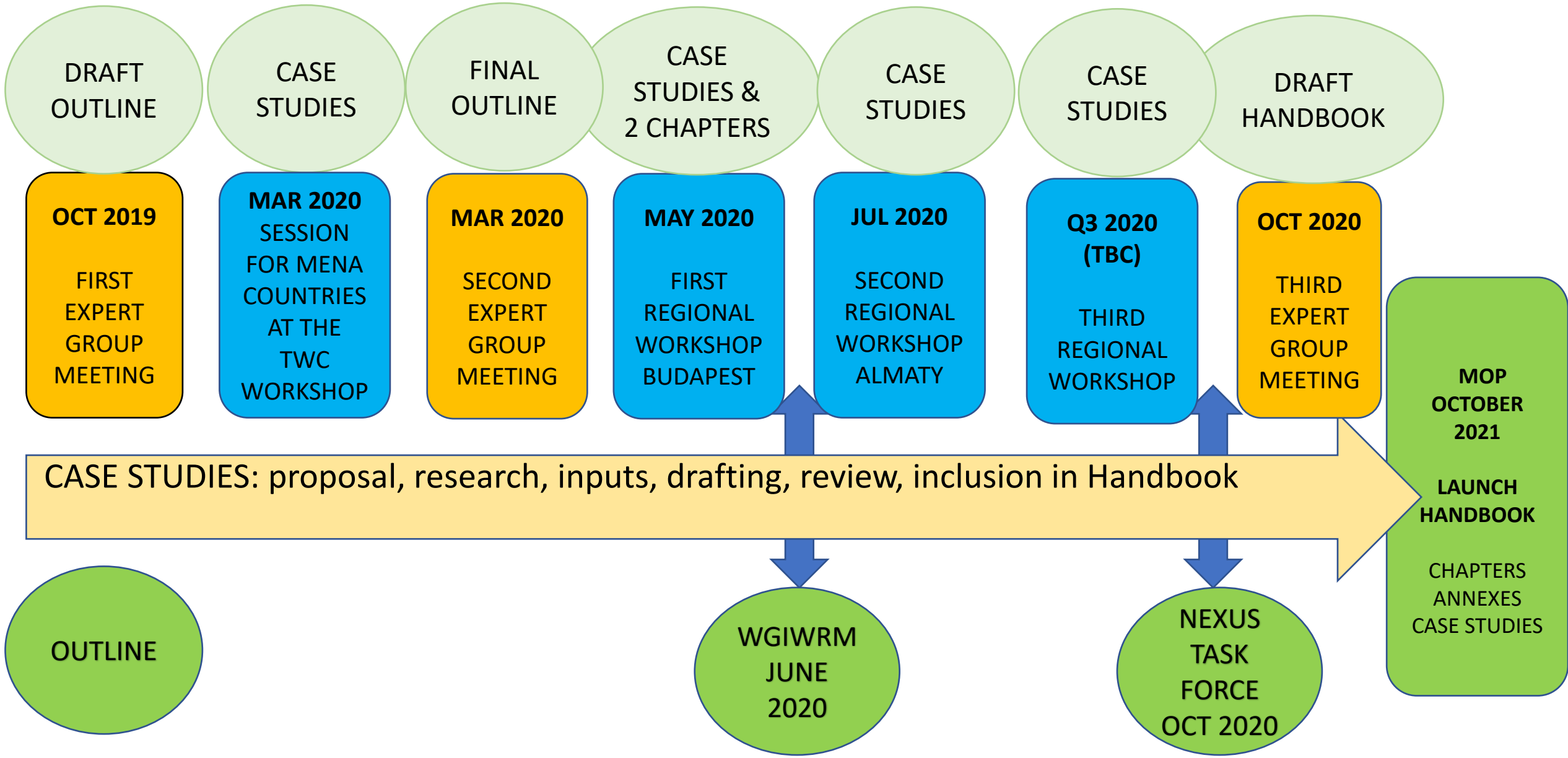
- **PURPOSE**

It aims to be a **practical guide providing an overview of the key elements**, frameworks and modalities to consider in the application of water allocation in basins.

- **FORMAT**

It will take the form of a **compendium style Handbook**, covering the major topics and **exemplar case studies to illustrate key elements** of transboundary water allocation in different contexts, with a **bibliography of specific references for further research** as the Handbook user may need.

Timeline for development and publication



Interactive group discussion

4 groups - 4 topics of discussion

We invite you to join one of the group discussions based on your interest:

Group 1
Limiting withdrawals

Group 2
Optimizing water storage

Group 3
Groundwaters

Group 4
Institutional framework

Questions for group discussion:

- What allocation strategies/approach are in place in your country/basin ?
- Do you have any good practices/lessons learnt to recommend at transboundary level?
- What challenges do you experience-with regards to this specific aspect?

Next steps and call for inputs

Take away messages

- Handbook will draw from water allocation experience around the world (not limited to the Water Convention)
- Handbook = Universal Resource Document addressed to practitioners
- Use this opportunity for MENA countries to provide feedback, submit ideas for case studies to be considered in the handbook
- Updated drafts of the Handbook will be made available for review at different stages of development to all interested countries under the Working Groups on IWRM (organized under the Water Convention framework) in June 2020 and May 2021 and during the Nexus Task Force in October 2020.

How to engage?

Tell us your stories!

We welcome ideas and further contibutions successes & challenges, at national and transboundary level from the MENA region!

If interested in contributing to the global handbook, we invite you to contact the secretariat:

Annukka.lipponen@un.org

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Allocation handbook concept note available at: https://bit.ly/2PrvQ9n

Envisaged role of case studies in the Handbook

1. Analysis of different aspects of water allocation in the practice worldwide

Material for the Handbook team to draw upon for the drafting. Makes up an inventory to find examples -> the more the better

A possible annex to the Handbook (even an electronic one)

2. Examples illustrating specific features/solutions/limitations

Describe a specific aspect (not comprehensive!): solution to a need, scope of an agreement/instrument, a process, etc. -> selected relevant few

Boxes to appear in relevant sections

Handbook Case studies can illustrate different aspects

Physical	**Legal, institutional and policy aspects**
- **Hydrological variability** - **Scarcity** - **Water quality issues** - **Ecosystem needs** - **etc**	- **Features of an agreement in place** - **Institutional framework to discuss water allocation issues** - **Coordinated policies to reach water allocation objectives**
Information needs	Options
- Joint or coordinated assessment of water resources - Exchange of data and information - Scenarios of demands	- agreement, protocol - Operational rules - Technical measures, demand management