

# Breaking down silos: Transboundary and intersectoral cooperation must be strengthened for Source-to-Sea management

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# Main messages of the presentation

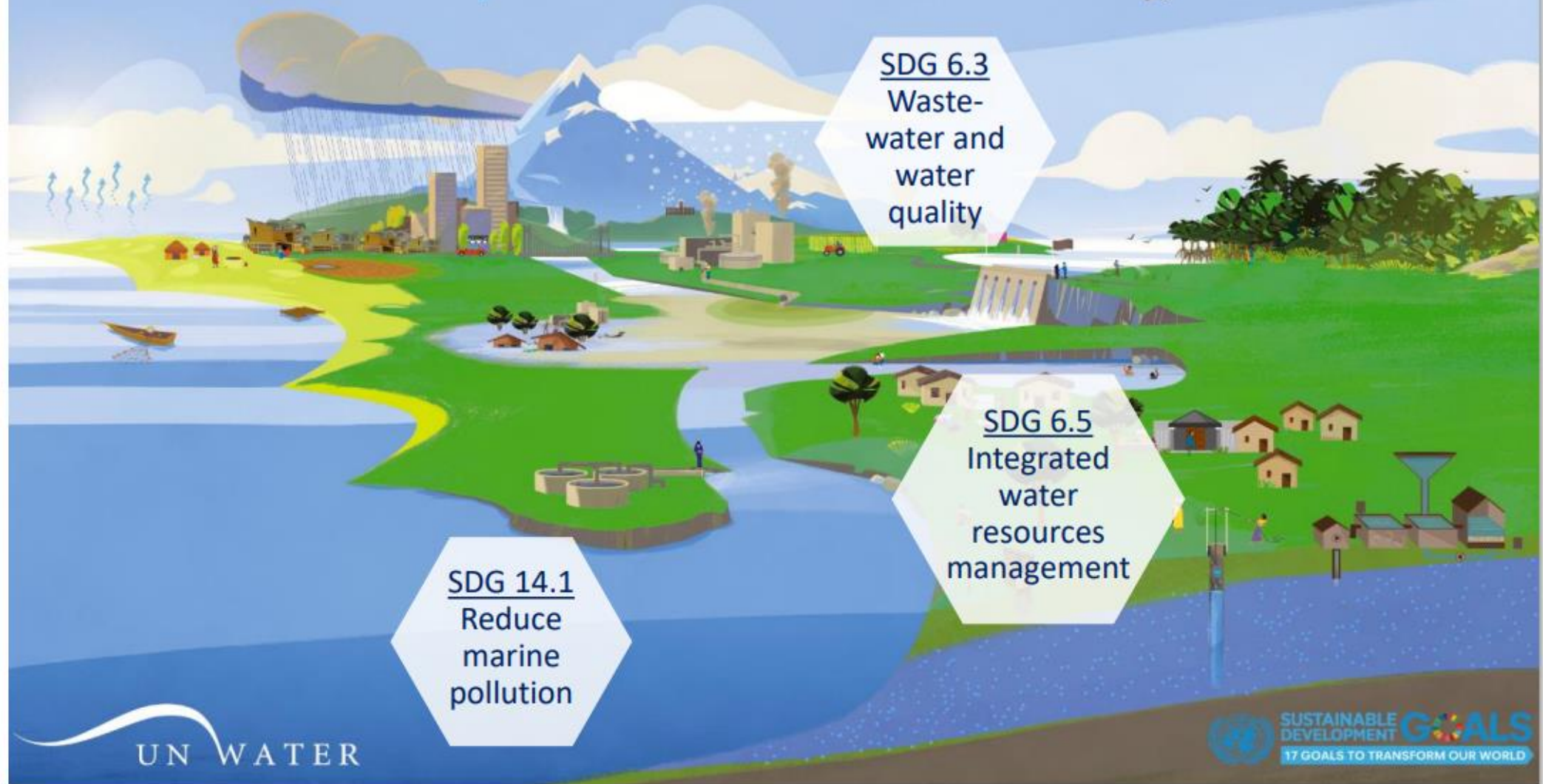
- Pollution flows must be tackled at the source before entering freshwater and marine environment;
- Transboundary river basin organisations, marine conventions and UN water convention can cooperate for joint actions and policy development;
- Such actions require building novel collaboration initiatives and breaking down the traditional freshwater and marine silos of national, regional, and global organisations;

# Background & Motivation for promoting Source to Sea management

- More than 60% of freshwater resources worldwide are shared by two or more countries – **making transboundary waters one of the major carriers of pollution to marine environments;**
- The **source-to-sea approach** aims at Managing land, freshwater, coastal and marine resources holistically and bridging existing gaps by tackling maritime pollution at the source, upstream;
- The **Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)** can help to build bridges between sectors and countries, balance diverse interests, involve multiple stakeholders and institutions and provide policy advice, where needed.

# Starting at the source to protect the sea

## The Water Cycle in the Sustainable Development Goals



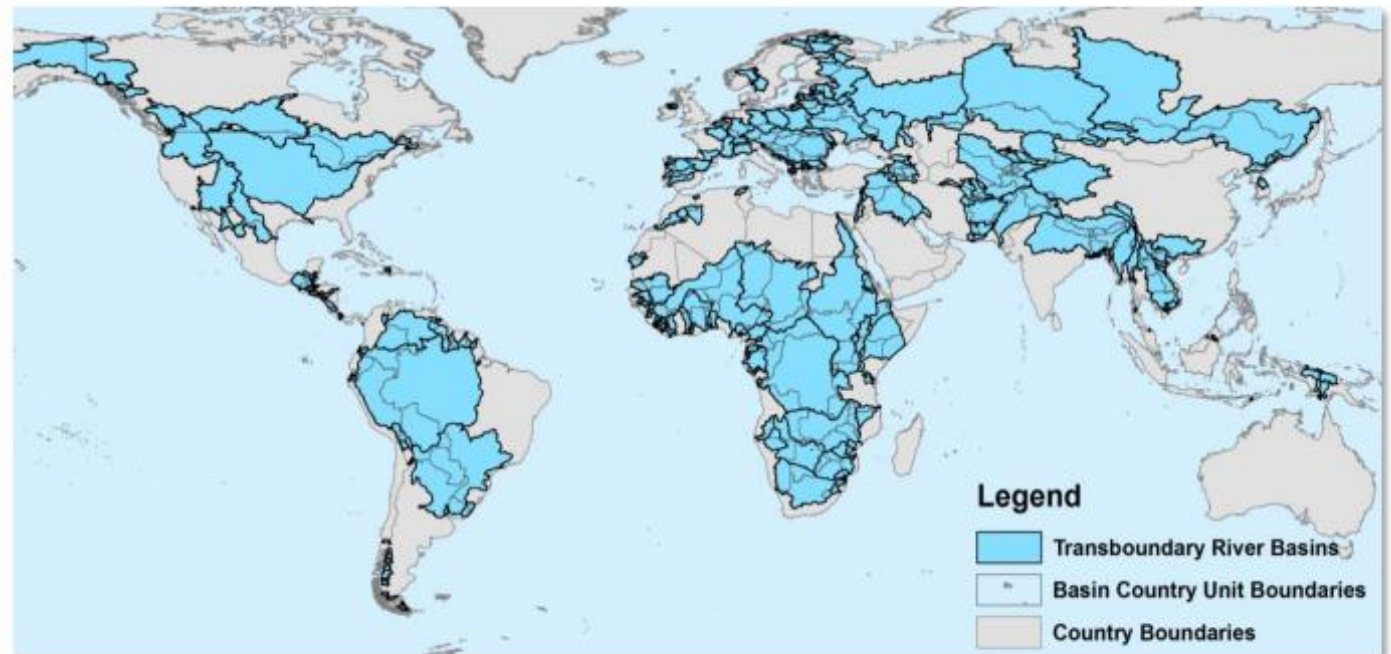
# Why transboundary cooperation is relevant for source-to-sea management?

- Majority of basins in the world are shared by two or more countries
- 6 of the 10 rivers contributing 90% of the plastic waste to oceans are transboundary
- Coordinated action among sectors and countries is key

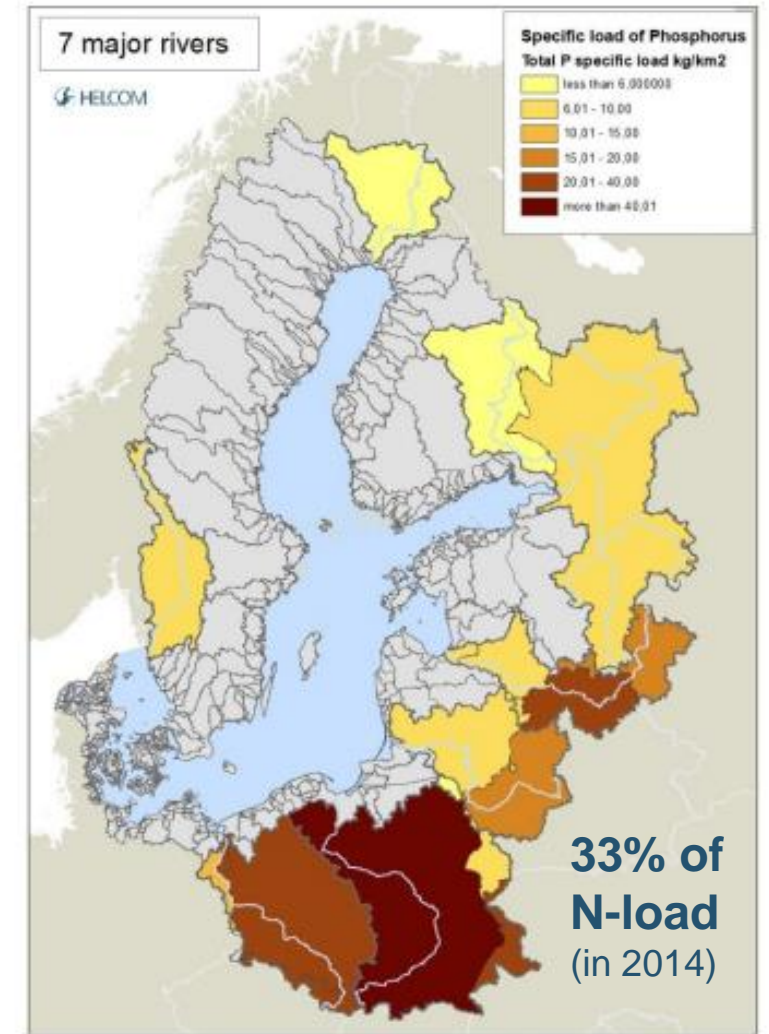
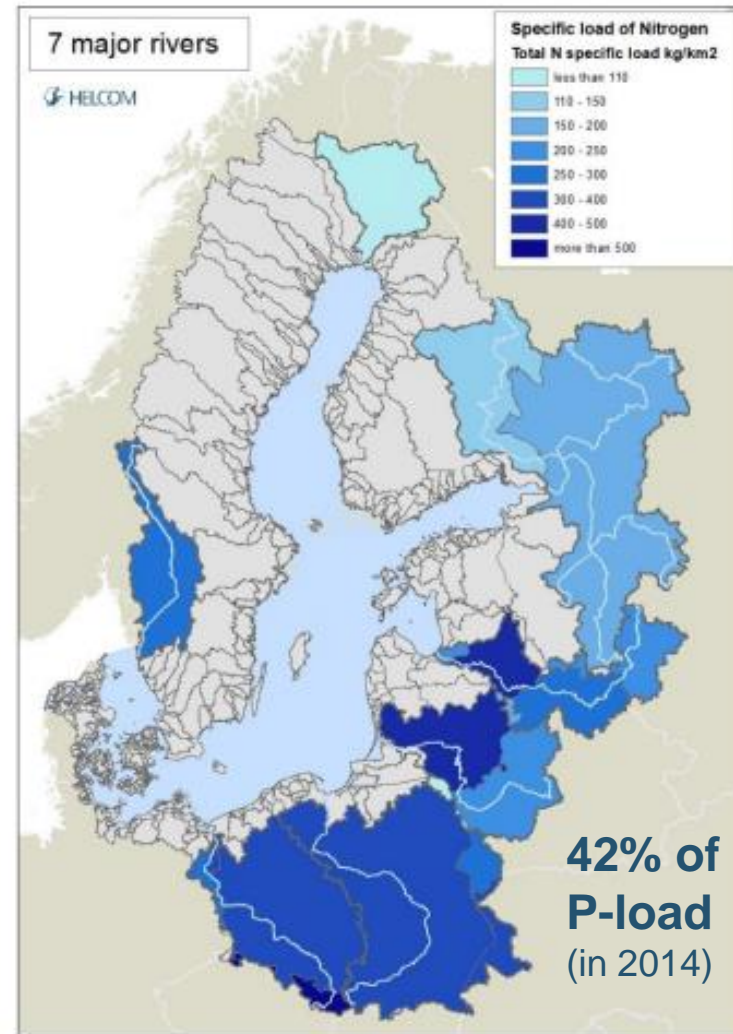
**Sharing efforts, costs  
and benefits**



*Transboundary cooperation can help to use  
resources and allocate the costs for  
ecosystems protection and pollution  
prevention more efficiently and eventually  
reduce them*



# 7 biggest rivers in the Baltic Sea Drainage basin are all transboundary



**Figure 3.** Area specific loads kg km<sup>-2</sup> (load/ area) of total nitrogen and total phosphorus from the catchments or sub-catchment of the seven biggest rivers (2014).

# Global Workshop on Source-to-sea Management, under the Water Convention

- Water Convention promotes **integrated water resources management in transboundary basins** (programme area lead by **Estonia and Slovenia**)
- **Global Workshop on Source-to-sea Management** (14-16 December 2022, Geneva) was organized, with the goal to
  - increase the understanding of the interlinkages between marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems;
  - showcase best practices, propose practical steps for achieving effective source-to-sea management;
  - discuss challenges and possible future work areas in the framework of the Water Convention and beyond;
  - take up the topic that is high on the agenda of the global water community (UN Environment Assembly 2022, Ocean Conference 2022, UN 2023 Water conference, etc.)
- More about workshop, presentations & outcomes: [Global Workshop on Source-to-sea Management | UNECE](#)

# Global Workshop on Source-to-sea Management; Organisers



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
AND SPATIAL PLANNING



Mediterranean  
Action Plan  
Barcelona  
Convention



Intergovernmental  
Oceanographic  
Commission



Global Water  
Partnership





# Draft outcomes from the Global workshop to strengthen **transboundary and intersectoral cooperation**

- More **holistic approach** is necessary to overcome institutional and legislative silos and to coordinate across sectors and national borders;
- Stronger coordination between **decision-makers and researchers** and cross the traditional land-freshwater coastal and marine boundaries;
- The Water Convention has the **protection of marine environment** among its objectives: preventing, controlling and reducing transboundary impacts and applying the precautionary principle and 'polluter pays' principle.
- Cooperation between **river basin organizations** and **regional seas conventions**, by setting joint objectives, implementing jointly action plans (e.g. HELCOM, Danube River Commission (ICPDR) - Black Sea Commission).

## Draft outcomes from the Global workshop to strengthen **joint transboundary actions**


- Source-to-sea **data and information exchange**, **harmonisation** of surveys and **standardisation** of monitoring could be part of cooperation between river basin organisations and regional seas conventions.
- Mapping of pollution pathways from source-to-sea to improve the understanding of common goals and support the prioritisation of actions to against pollution at the local, regional and global scale.
- Highlighting benefits for upstream countries is crucial (e.g. benefits from ecosystem protection or restoration can transfer upstream)
- Synergies needed between Integrated Water Resources Management, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning

# Draft outcomes from the Global workshop to strengthen **awareness and capacity-building**

- Increase understanding of the different flows of large-scale transboundary river systems to the large marine ecosystems and ocean as a whole;
- Understand and identify clear management objectives for connected flows from land to sea and to prioritize actions to deliver positive outcomes;
- Demonstrate economic, environmental and social benefits of applying the source-to-sea approach;
- Capacity building is needed at all levels of government. The private sector needs to be involved in financing action. Public sector finance can trigger private sector investment;
- Possible future work under the **Water Convention** includes cooperation with the **Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management** ([S2S](#)), development of tools, principles and guidance, capacity building etc.

# HELCOM Actions to enable Source to Sea management


HELCOM



Baltic Sea  
Action Plan  
2021 update

Baltic Marine Environment  
Protection Commission


October 2021



36 Actions to tackle nutrient loading  
30 actions to tackle hazardous  
substances

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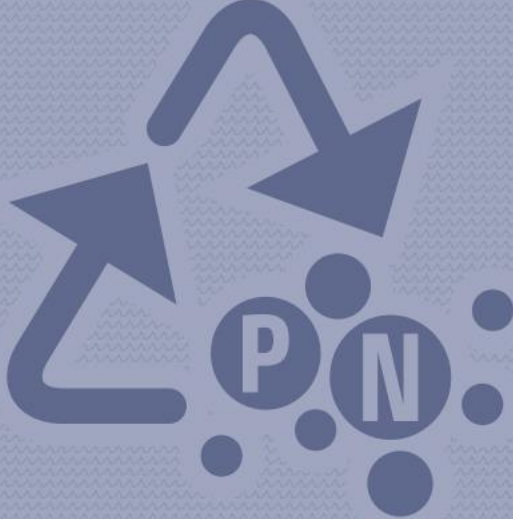
Baltic Sea  
Regional Nutrient  
Recycling Strategy

Baltic Marine Environment  
Protection Commission

October 2021

Nutrients

7 actions to promote nutrient recycling



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Revised Regional  
Action Plan on  
Marine Litter

Baltic Marine Environment  
Protection Commission

October 2021

Marine Litter

13 actions to reduce marine litter (including  
microplastics)



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# Thank you!



WEB

<https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/global-workshop-source-sea-management>



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