

The Status and Promotion of Transboundary Water Cooperation between China and its Neighbours

Chen Huiping

China International Water Law (CIWL), School of Law, Xiamen University

Regional Workshop on
Transboundary Water Cooperation in the context of the
SDGs in South Asia and beyond
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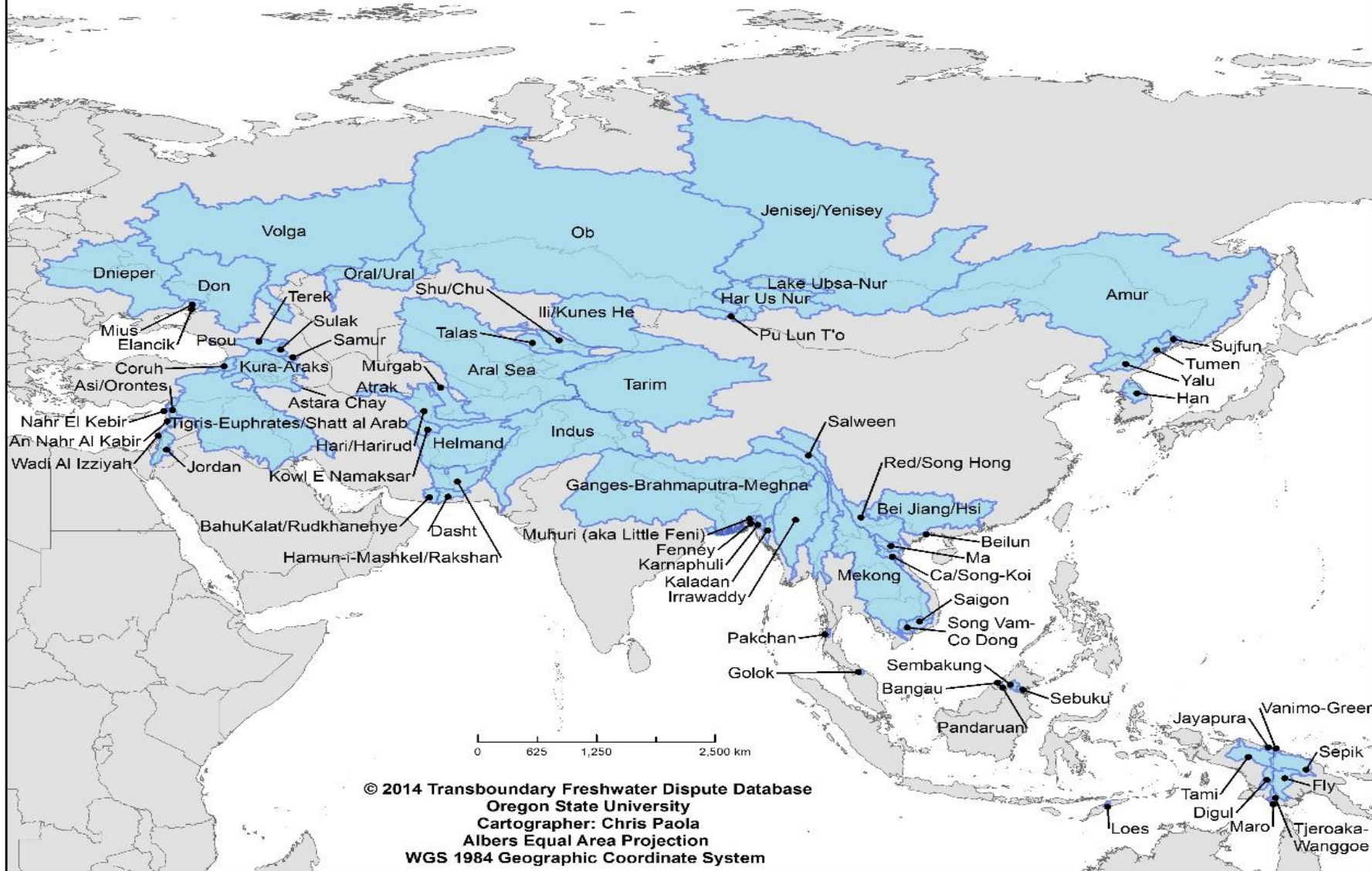
Outline

- I. Transboundary Water Cooperation: China's Longstanding Foreign Policy
- II. Transboundary Water Cooperation Between China and its Neighbours
- III. China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative: Furthering Transboundary Water Cooperation
- IV. Conclusion

I. Transboundary Water Cooperation: China's Longstanding Foreign Policy

A. Pursuing transboundary water cooperation is China's best choice.

Transboundary River Basins of Asia



Connected and divided by its international rivers, lakes and aquifers, Asia is home to some of the world's greatest transboundary river systems.

China shares more than 40 major transboundary waters with its 14 (mostly) downstream riparian neighbour countries.



B. Conducting transboundary water cooperation is coherent with China's longstanding position towards international affairs

- International cooperation is a general principle of international law.
- China consistently pursues international cooperation in its foreign policy.



Five Principles
of Peaceful Co-
existence

Good-
Neighbourliness
and Friendship

South-South
Cooperation

North-South
Cooperation

Win-Win
Cooperation

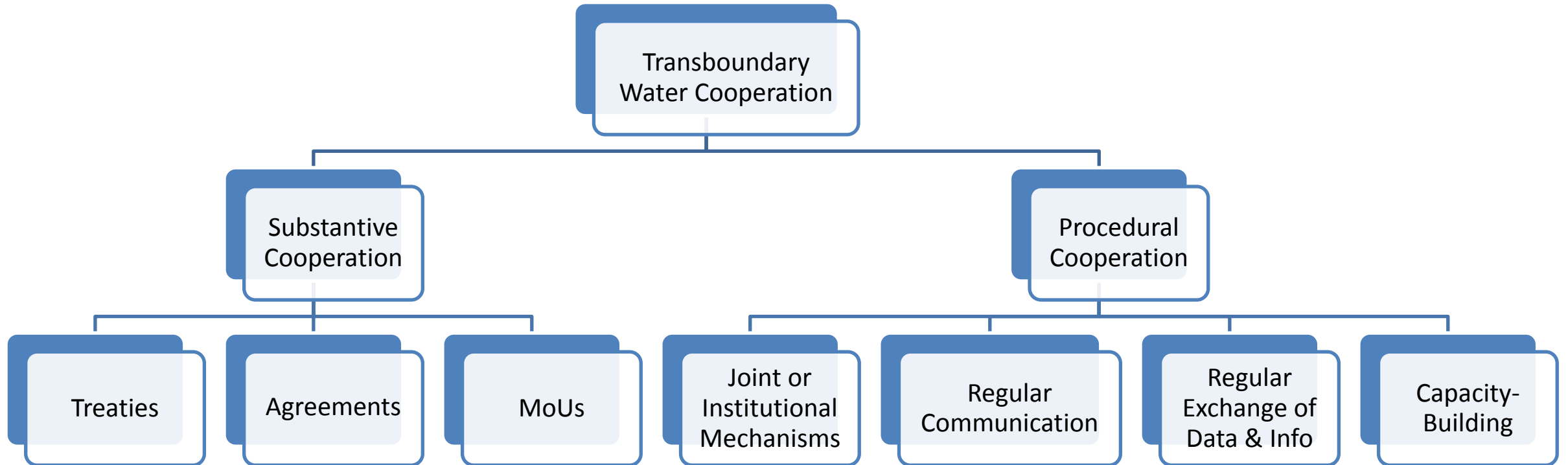
China's
Foreign
Policy

- These principles and policies are in line with the United Nations Convention on the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UNWC) *General obligation to cooperate*, embodied in Article 8:

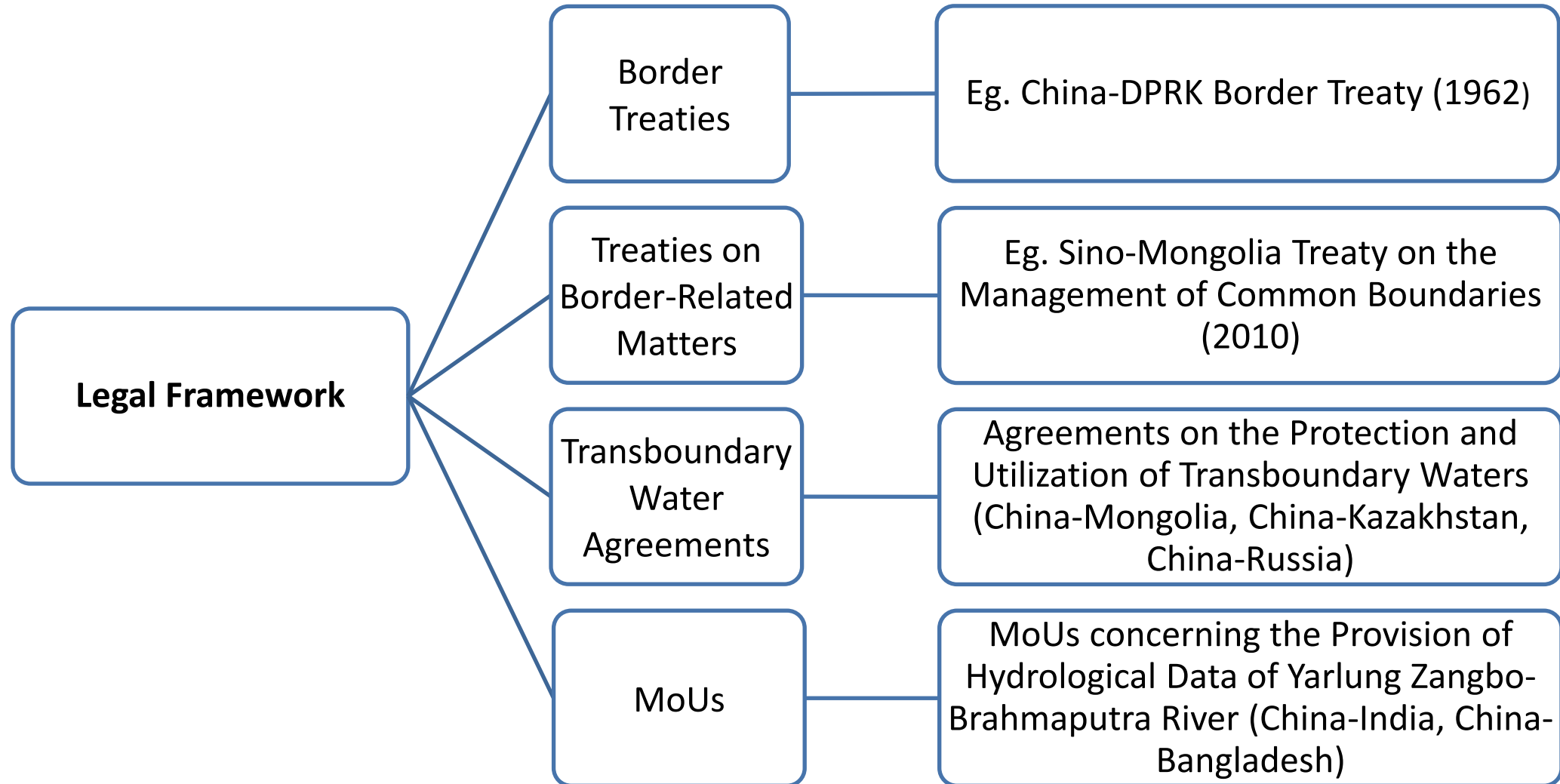
“Watercourse States shall cooperate on the basis of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, mutual benefit and good faith in order to attain optimal utilization and adequate protection of an international watercourse.”

II. Transboundary Water Cooperation Between China and its Neighbours

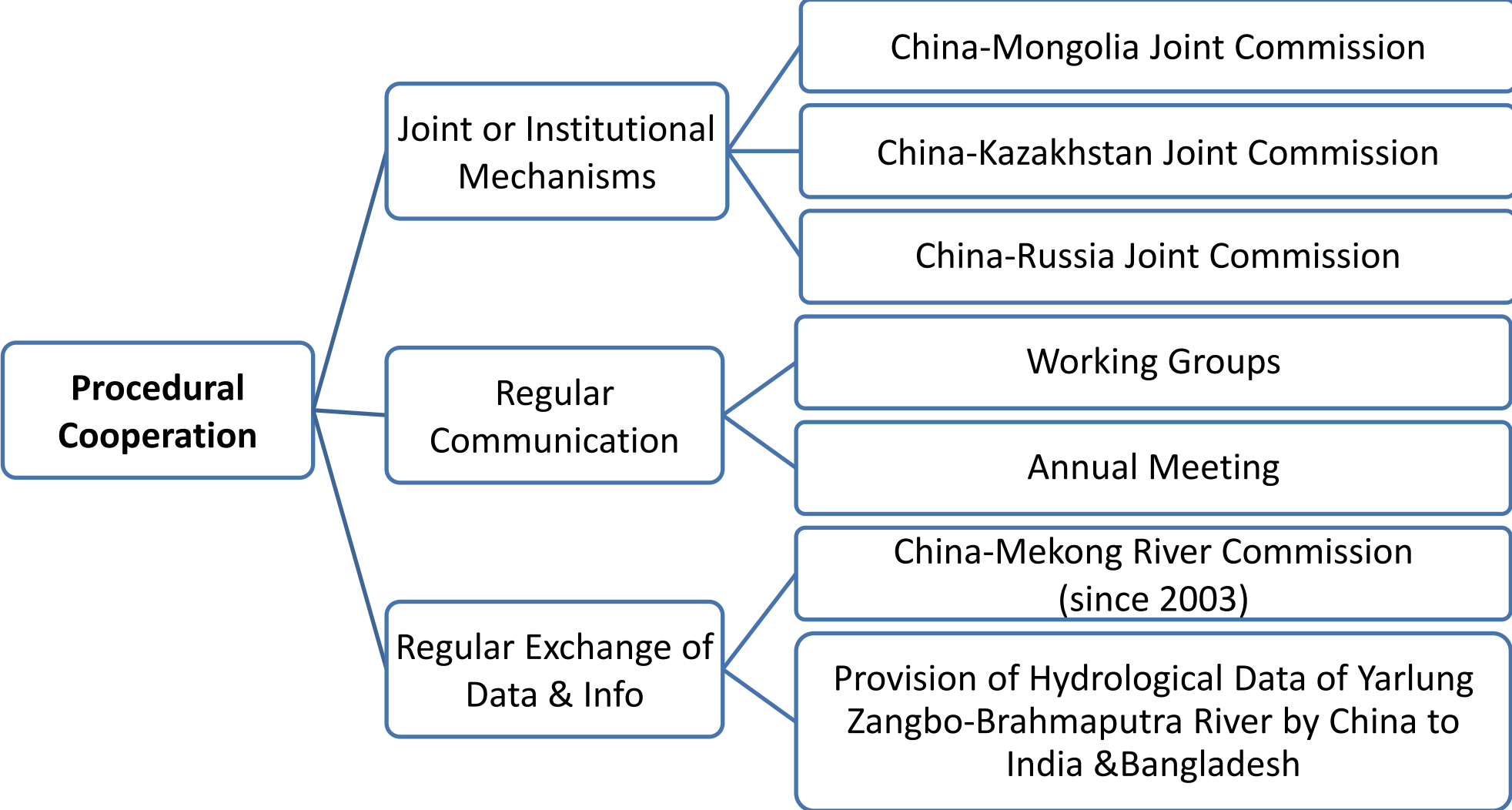
A. Analytical framework



B. Substantive Cooperation: *Examples of China's International Legal Frameworks for Water Cooperation*

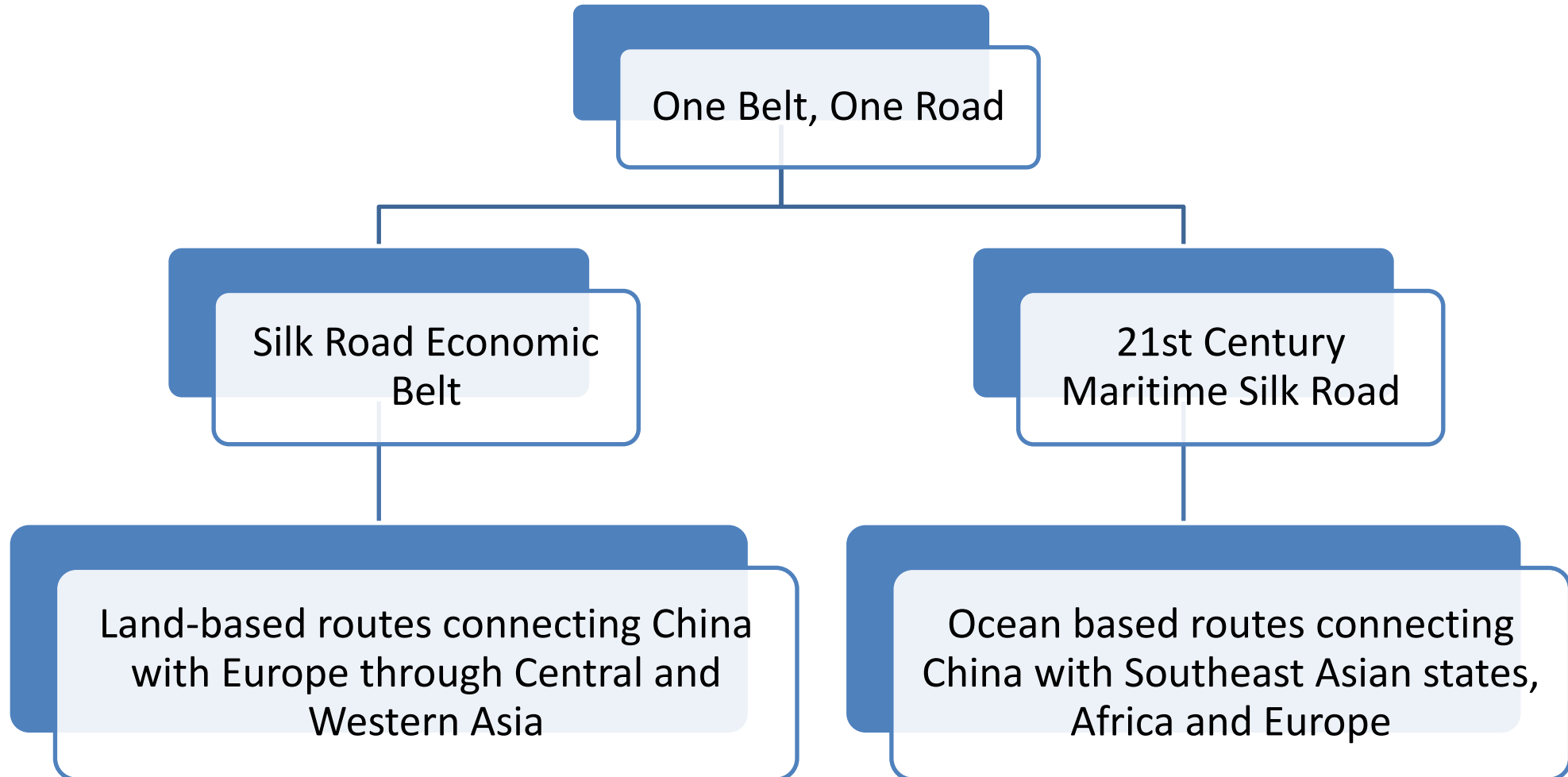


C. Procedural Cooperation: China has established several joint commissions on transboundary waters with its northern and western riparian neighbours



III. China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative: Furthering Transboundary Water Cooperation

A. Basics about One Belt, One Road

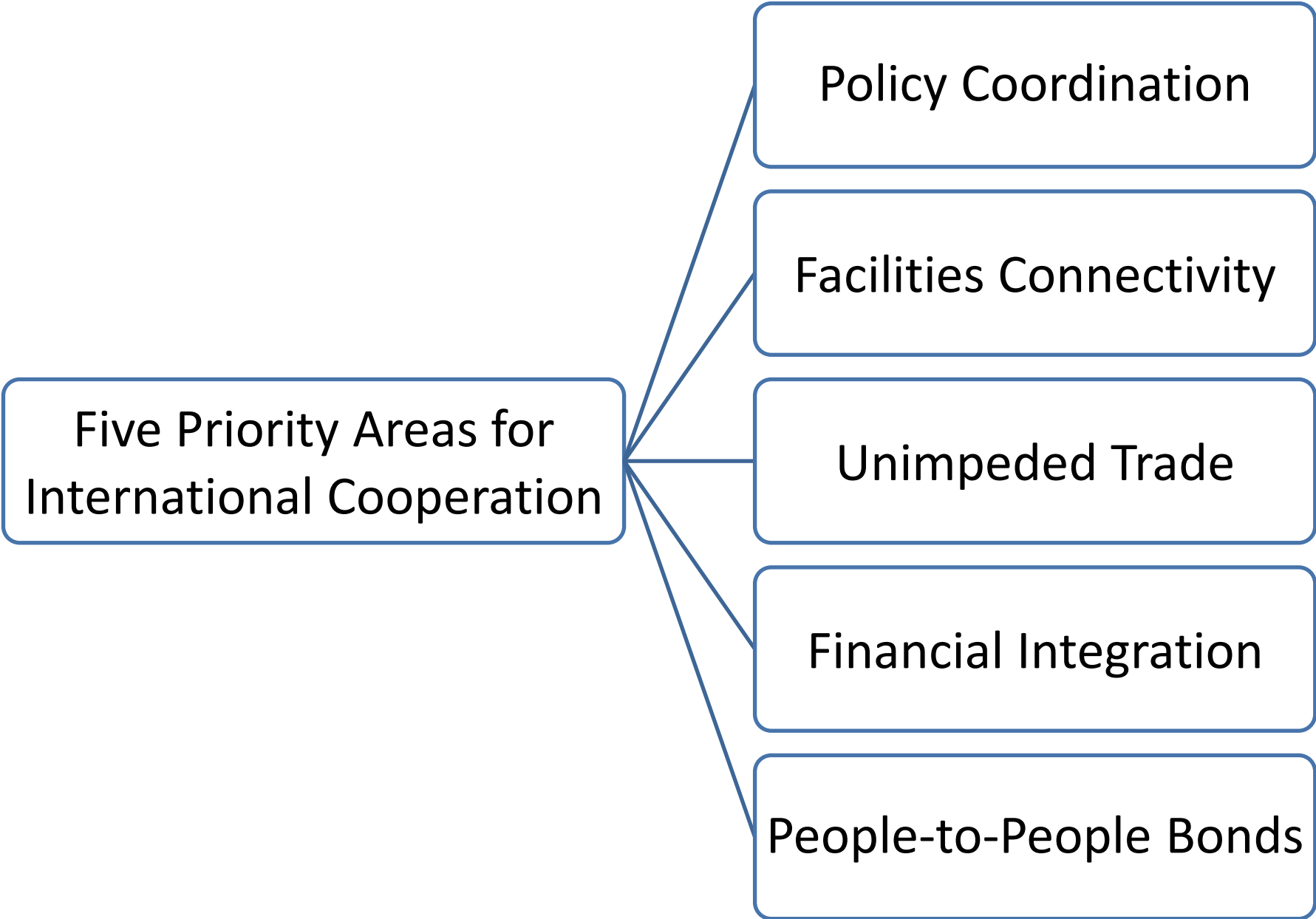


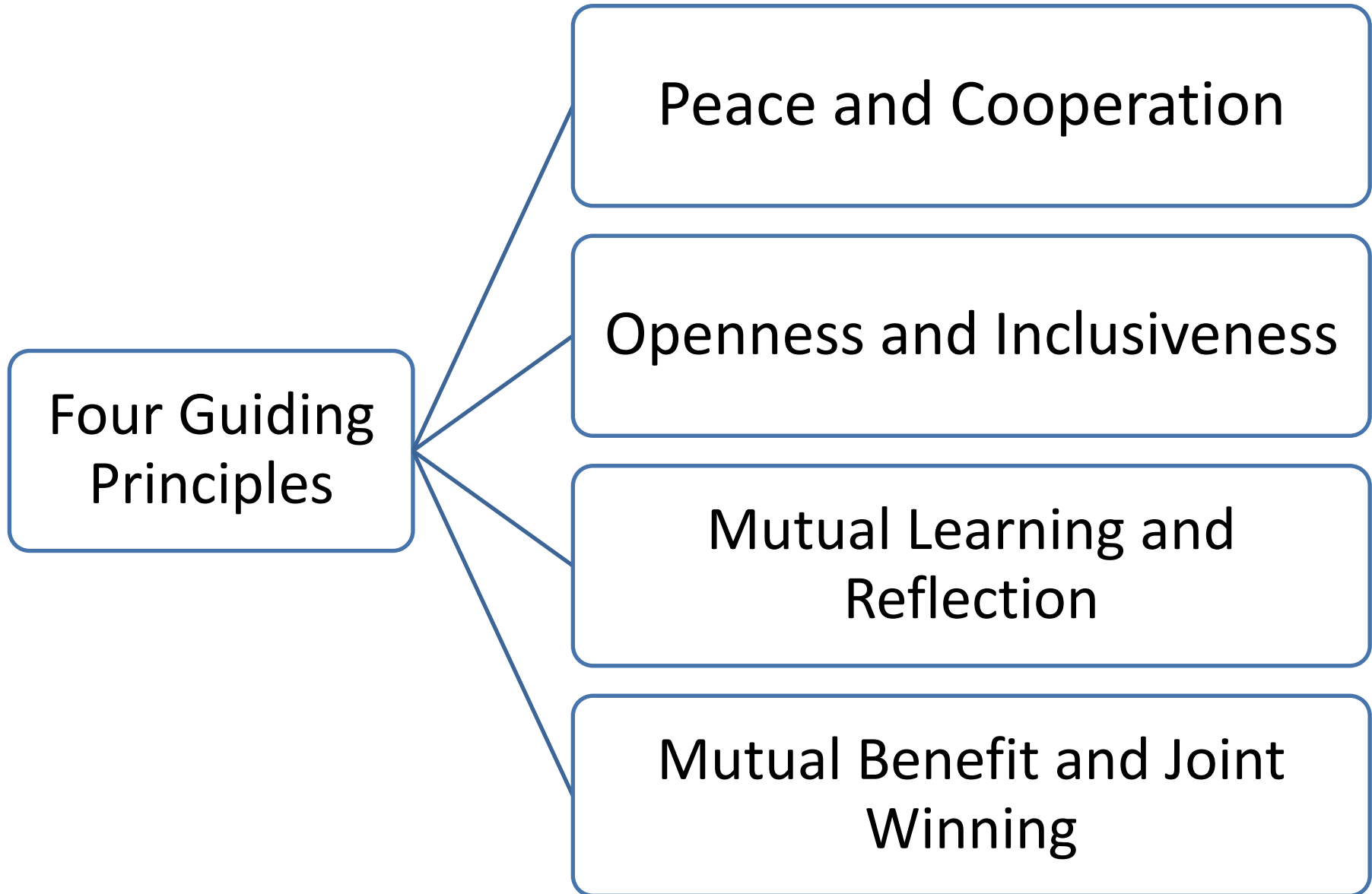
The “One Belt,
One Road”
Initiative includes
most Asian
countries.

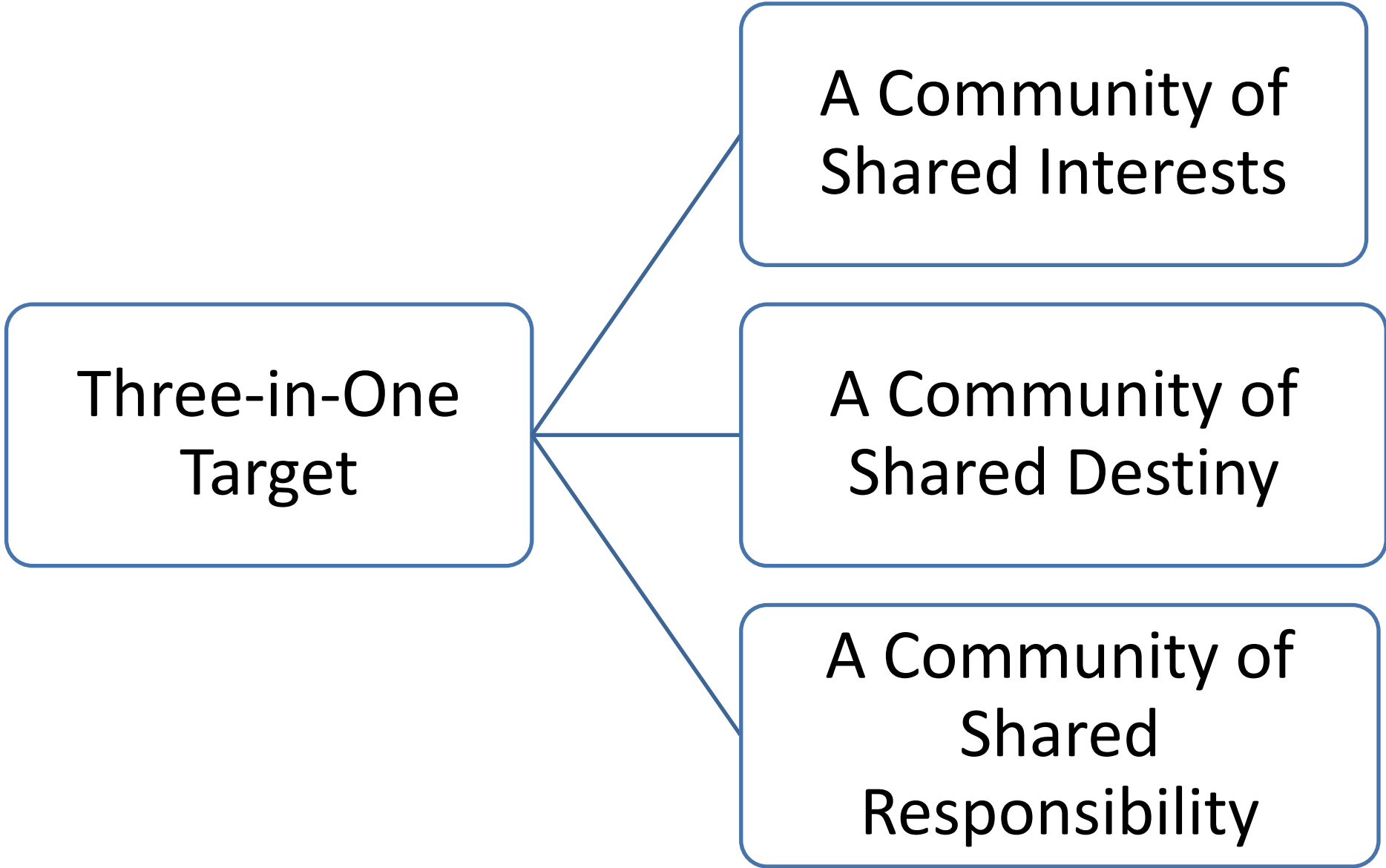


Source: Xinhua News, Available at <http://en.xinfinance.com/html/OBAOR/>

- The Initiative is referred to by some as China's *Marshall Plan* (officially the European Recovery Program).
- It represents a large-scale, regional development cooperation, promoting practical cooperation in all fields.
- This policy is one method for win-win cooperation, promoting common development and prosperity and a road towards peace and friendship by enhancing mutual understanding and trust, and strengthening exchange in all areas.







Three-in-One
Target

A Community of
Shared Interests

A Community of
Shared Destiny

A Community of
Shared
Responsibility

- To partially complement and support the Initiative, three financial institutions have been established:
 - Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
 - New Silk Road Fund (NSRF) (USD\$40 billion)
 - BRICS New Development Bank

- The “One Belt, One Road” Initiative has been well-recognized in the international community.
- More than 100 countries and international organizations including the United Nations responded or participated in the Initiative.

“The essential spirit of the Belt and Road is to promote win-win cooperation, common development and prosperity, peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, and mutual understanding and trust, conforming to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter as well as the values of the 2030 Agenda.”

*(Quoted from *Jointly building the “Belt and Road” towards the Sustainable Development Goals*, by United Nations, 16 August 2016, New York)*

B. The “One Belt, One Road” Initiative led to China’s active response to the 2030 Agenda of the SDGs

Goal 6: “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”

6.a By 2030, expand **international cooperation** and **capacity-building** support to developing countries in water and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.

China’s National Plan on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2016)

6.a “Actively advance **South-South Cooperation** on water- and environment-related areas, help other developing countries strengthen the capacity building for resource conservation, climate change mitigation and green, low-carbon development, and provide them with **assistance and support** within China’s capacity.”

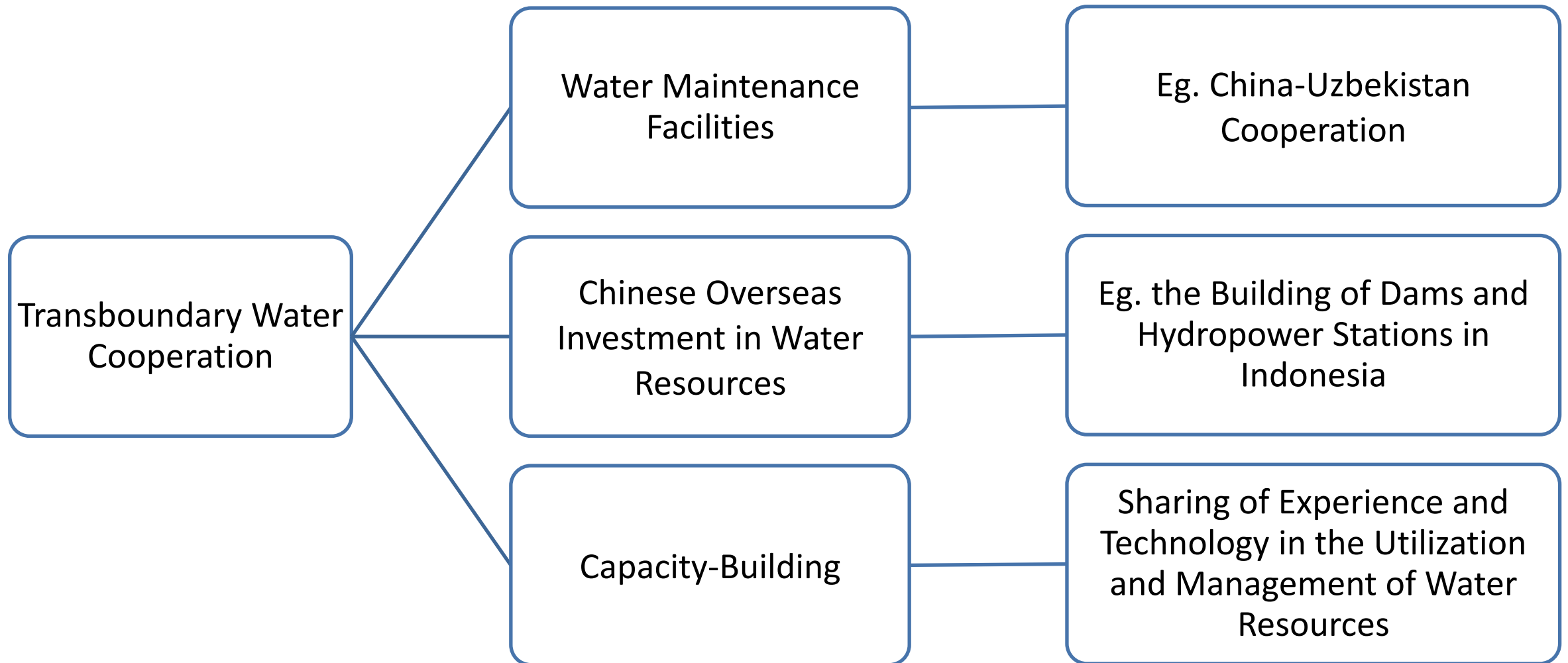
- UN DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division (DPAD) has recently launched a capacity development project, in cooperation with China, to assess the “macroeconomic implications of the Belt and Road Initiative” for countries along the Belt and Road, in the broad context of realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

C. The Belt and Road Initiative promotes cooperation on the Mekong River

- The Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism was launched by China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam in 2015.
- The new mechanism covers five priority areas:
 - 1) interconnectivity, 2) production capacity, 3) cross-border economic cooperation, 4) cooperation on water resources and
 - 5) cooperation on agriculture and poverty reduction.

- 2016 Sanya Declaration of the First Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Leaders' Meeting *For a Community of Shared Future of Peace and Prosperity among Lancang-Mekong Countries*:
- Enhance cooperation among LMC countries **in sustainable water resources management and utilization** through activities such as:
 - the establishment of a center in China for Lancang-Mekong water resources cooperation to serve as a platform for LMC countries to strengthen comprehensive cooperation in technical exchanges,
 - capacity building,
 - drought and flood management,
 - data and information sharing,
 - conducting joint research and analysis related to Lancang-Mekong river resources.

D. The Belt and Road Initiative will promote Transboundary Water Cooperation in Several Areas



IV. Conclusion

- China is a country that shares many river basins with its many neighbours.
- It has a history of transboundary water cooperation, most notably on its northern borders, however cooperation is progressing with its southern neighbours step-by-step.
- China's One-Belt, One-Road Initiative is one strategy for China to increase this cooperation, and simultaneously support the achievement of the SDGs along the path of the Belt and Road.

Thank you!

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