

# Status of IWRM & Transboundary Cooperation in Central America

## Summary of the 2023 reports for indicators 6.5.1 and 6.5.2

**T**his report presents an update on the status of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and transboundary water cooperation in six Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama), within the framework of the third monitoring cycle of indicators 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)<sup>1</sup>.

The document complements the 2021 regional report, “Status of Implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management in Central America and the Dominican Republic for 2020<sup>2</sup>” by offering a more operational view focused on IWRM implementation

and transboundary cooperation, compared to the more strategic 2021 report.

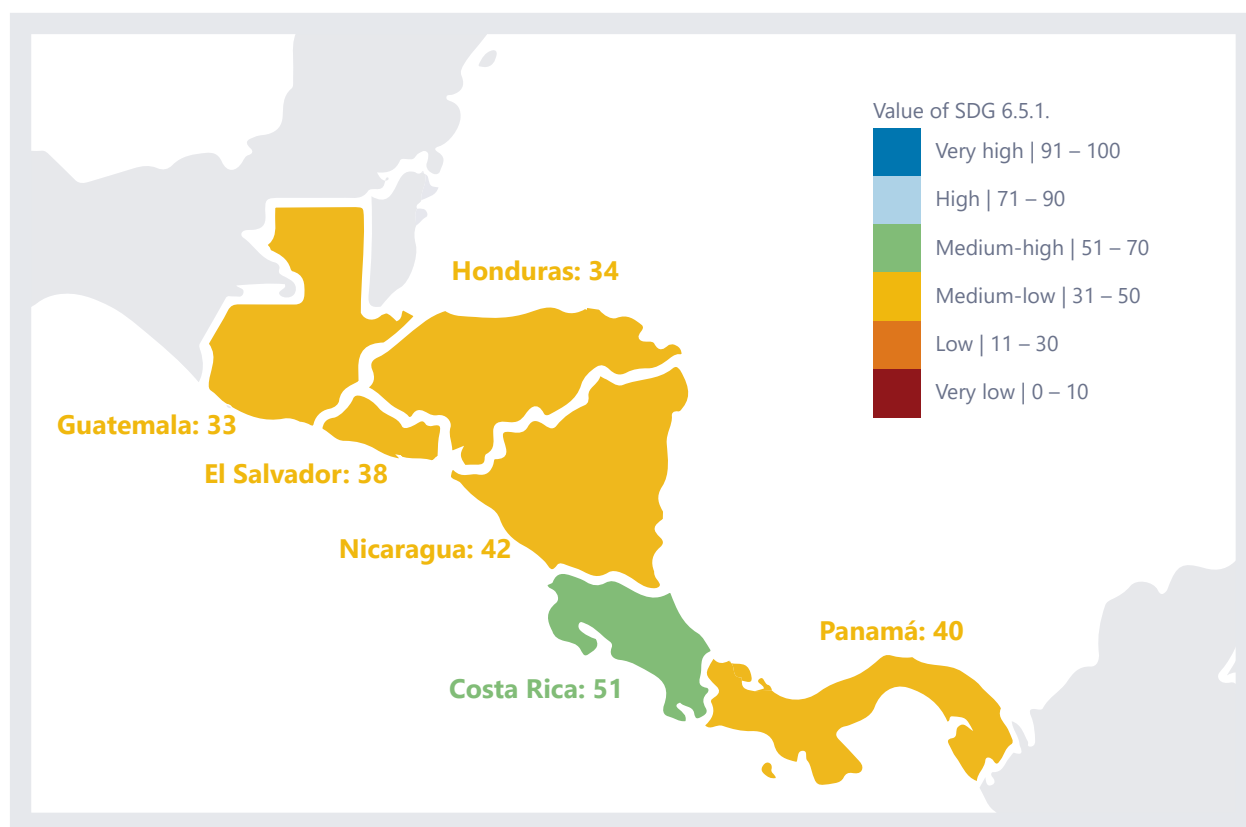
Indicator 6.5.1 assesses the degree of implementation of IWRM through a survey of 33 questions on enabling environment, institutions, management instruments and financing. Indicator 6.5.2 measures the proportion of transboundary basin area with operational cooperation agreements.

The average score for SDG 6.5.1 in Central America is 40% (medium-low). Countries overall advanced from low to medium-low, which is significant because in both previous assessments (2017 and

<sup>1</sup> Belize and the Dominican Republic are not included, as these countries are part of the Global Water Partnership Caribbean.

<sup>2</sup> This report was published in collaboration with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the environmental body of the Central American Integration System (SICA). The SICA member countries include Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. The [Executive Summary](#) of this document is available online in English.

## Value of SDG 6.5.1. in Central America - 2023



## Value of SDG 6.5.1. in Central America - 2017, 2020 and 2023



2020), four of the countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua) had shown limited progress. In terms of transboundary water cooperation, only two basins and two aquifers have operational arrangements, with a regional average of just 5%, compared to 59% globally.

The main challenges the region faces include the limited specific funding for IWRM, the lack of generation and systematization of data for decision-making, the inequality in IWRM implementation between national and subnational levels, and the lack of institutionalization of mechanisms or arrangements for the management of transboundary basins.

Although significant progress has been made, the region will not reach target 6.5 by 2030. Some of the recommendations to move forward are: the establishment of intermediate goals by 2030, including elements such as the strengthening of local and transboundary water institutions, the integration of the water and climate agenda, the implementation of financial instruments, and the diversification of sources of financing for IWRM. It is also important to promote the participation of the private sector and vulnerable groups in the management of water resources.

The implementation of these recommendations can be catalyzed through the development of IWRM Action Plans, or through the updating of existing planning instruments in countries. It is also essential to improve the justification of the importance of investment in IWRM for the fulfillment of national and international goals and commitments; to make its importance visible to decision-makers and ensure the necessary financial allocation.

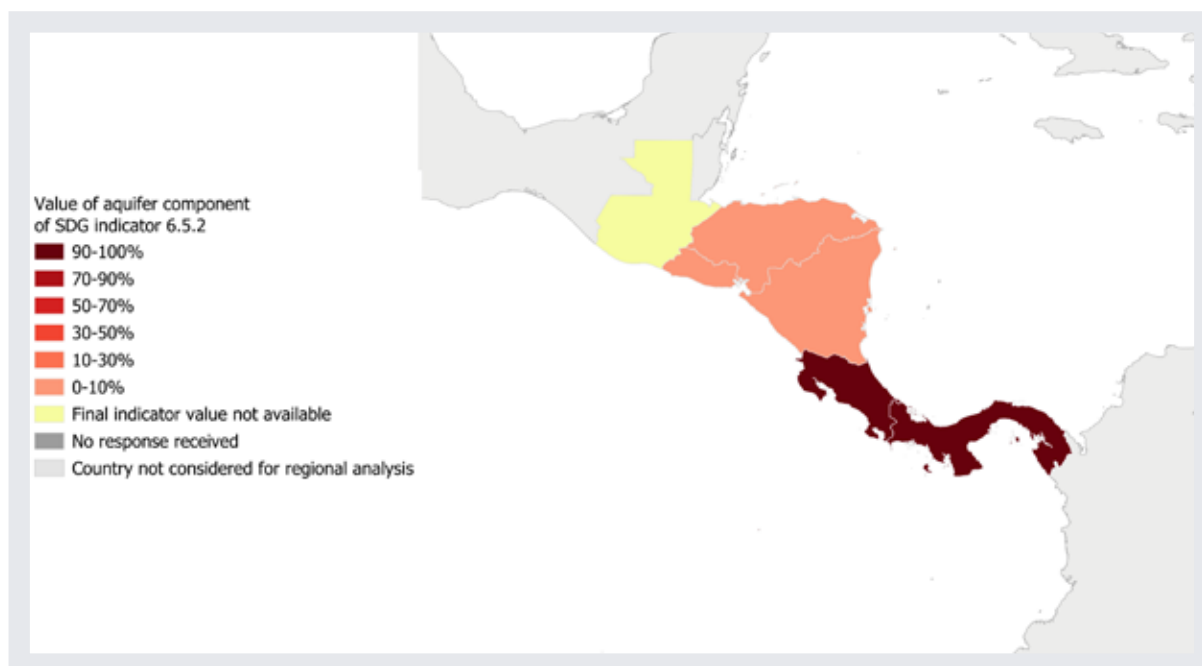
The collaborative implementation of IWRM Action Plans (or similar instruments) will be strengthened with the establishment of a regional coordination mechanism to facilitate their follow-up, the exchange of experiences and lessons learned.

The assessment of SDG 6.5 provides an opportunity to clearly see progress and challenges in IWRM implementation and transboundary water cooperation. In addition to fulfilling the commitment made to the 2030 Agenda, it also offers inputs to guide national planning. In this sense, it can be said that the region has a basis to continue strengthening IWRM and transboundary cooperation as pillars of water security and climate resilience in Central America.

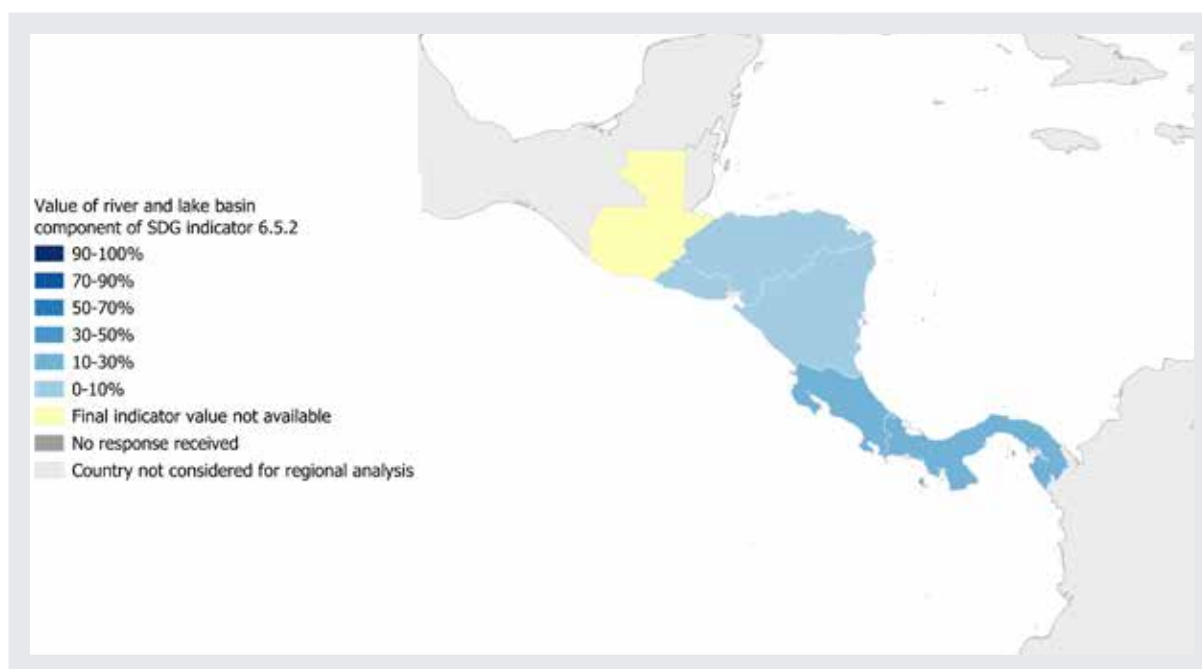
## Value of SDG indicator 6.5.2 in Central America - 2023



## Value of aquifer component of SDG indicator 6.5.2 in Central America - 2023



## Value of river and lake basin component of SDG indicator 6.5.2 in Central America - 2023



This is a summary of the document [“Status of IWRM & Transboundary Cooperation in Central America”](#), available in Spanish. GWP is an international action network involved in water management. Our vision is a water secure world and our mission is to advance governance and management of water resources for sustainable and equitable development.