

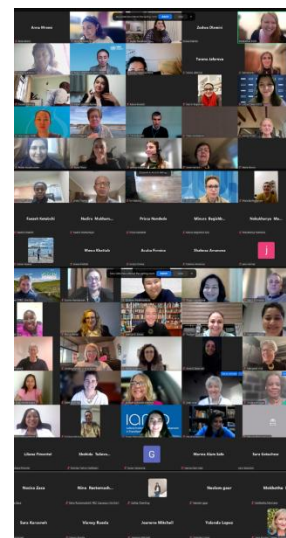
Women in Water Diplomacy Network 2024 Year-in-Review Event After Action Report¹

December 17, 2024 | Online



The event's presentation can be found [here](#). The video recording can be accessed [here](#).

The Women in Water Diplomacy Network is a community of practice comprised of both formal and informal women decision-makers working collectively to strengthen women's leadership in transboundary water decision-making with support from a global coalition of partners and members in basins across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The third-annual Women in Water Diplomacy Network online Year-in-Review event was held on December 17, 2024 from 15:00-17:00 CET. The event was hosted by Women in Water Diplomacy Network Process Support Team and partners, including the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), and The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), and was attended by over 120 experts from more than 37 countries. The 2024 Year-in-Review served as an opportunity to collectively reflect on the 2024 milestones and contribute to shaping the Network's priorities for 2025.



Key takeaways from the event included:

- 2024 marked the biggest year yet for Network engagements, with 9 in-person and 7 online trainings/knowledge exchange workshops, 2 research and communications actions, and 5 collective engagement and visibility actions at major regional and global water policy dialogues.
- The total number of individuals participating in Network activities grew from 634 in 2023 to 745 in 2024.
- The Network will launch a new Global Leadership Council in 2025.

The following upcoming 2025 engagements and goals were elevated during the Year-in-Review session:

- Quarterly Online Experience Exchange Sessions, open to global engagement on key water diplomacy topics. Registration for Feb 11 session on confidence building measures is open – registration here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZctceCqqjosh9VyjnP9C0ENWCo6d2vv53fi>
- Celebrating key international dates with 'open' online events, including International Women's Day (March 8), International Women in Diplomacy Day (June 24), and the Annual Year-in-Review.
- Continuation of the Network Newsletter

¹ This Women in Water Diplomacy Network After Action Report was authored by Jesse Ferraioli with input from Elizabeth A. Koch, Women in Water Diplomacy Network Process Support Team members at the Environmental Law Institute.

Year-in-Review Session Detail

The event opened with Elizabeth Koch, Women in Water Diplomacy Network Process Support Team Lead and Senior Manager at the Environmental Law Institute, welcoming everyone to the third-annual Year-in-Review. Elizabeth provided a brief overview of the Network's 2017 inception in the Nile Basin and expansion to a global Network with the launch of the Network's global strategy, [‘A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security.’](#)

Elizabeth then transitioned into a recap of 2024 engagement highlights, challenges, and opportunities from across the Global Network. She noted that 2024 was the biggest year yet for Network engagements, with 9 in-person and 7 online trainings and knowledge exchange workshops, 2 research and communications actions, and 5 collective engagements at major regional and global water policy dialogues. In March, the Network convened as a global community for the 2nd Global Network Forum in Vienna, Austria. The Forum was attended by nearly 100 water diplomats from more than 40 countries. Throughout the year, Network partners hosted meet-ups and engagements at key regional and international dialogue events, including World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden; Africa Water Week in Cairo, Egypt; the UN Water Conference Meeting of the Parties in Ljubljana, Slovenia; and COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Network hosted several open online experience exchanges with partners, including a *Women Plus Water* “Water and Peace” Webinar, an event celebrating Women in (Water Science) Diplomacy Day, and a session focusing on how men can support the challenges women face in transboundary water institutions. Elizabeth then homed in on the 2024 engagement highlights from the regional networks. The Central Asia and Afghanistan Network engaged at the UN Water Action Decade ‘Dushanbe Process’ in June in Tajikistan and hosted an experience exchange workshop in September. The Nile Basin Network organized an experience exchange on the water, energy, food, and ecosystems nexus in July. The North American Network, launched at the end of 2023, held a stakeholder consultation in January 2024 and a Ten Tribes consultation in February 2024 to explore key questions about the Network's future trajectory. The North American Network hosted a session at the International Joint Commission Semi-Annual Conference in the U.S. in April. The Orange-Senqu Basin (currently under development) hosted a second preliminary consultation in April in Botswana. Meanwhile, the regional [South Caucasus](#) Network was launched with an inception workshop in Georgia in April, followed by a Water Diplomacy Workshop in October.

After recapping the 2024 activities, Elizabeth outlined opportunities for engagement in the Network. She explained that anyone can become a member by engaging with and supporting the mission and values of the Global Strategy and discussed ways to engage with and support the Network in 2025. Looking ahead, Elizabeth announced plans for the network to launch a new Global Leadership Council in 2025, with an application process forthcoming. She closed by previewing what to expect in 2025, including quarterly online experience exchanges, open online events celebrating key international such as International Women's Day and International Women in Diplomacy Day as well as the Annual Year-in-Review; the continuation of the Network newsletter, engagement at the UN Commission on the Status of Women engagement; and a potential Third Global Network Forum.

Following the recap of 2024 Network engagements globally and a preview of 2025 activities, participants had the opportunity to engage in two, 25-minute breakout rotations of their choosing. The four breakout room discussions focused on potential knowledge exchange themes for 2025, establishing a Global Network Leadership Council, opportunities for research cooperation, and strategies for resourcing our global community. **Dr. Zodwa Dlamini**, Independent Consultant and Former South Africa Chief Delegate

and Permanent Representative on the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission, facilitated the reporting-back session.

In the breakout sessions on *Knowledge Exchange Themes for 2025*, facilitated by **Dr. Roisin Burke**, Utrecht University, participants provided feedback on the draft list of session themes and brainstormed additional topics. The most popular topics identified included addressing challenges in transboundary data sharing and climate-proofing transboundary water agreements with gender-responsive adaptation measures. Other ideas for knowledge exchange topics included integrating youth leadership into transboundary water cooperation dialogues, examining the role of wetlands in community resilience, integrating Indigenous knowledge systems into water governance, and spotlighting confidence-building measures at different scales (including small-scale initiatives).

The discussions on *Establishing a Global leadership Council* were facilitated by **Sogol Jafarzedeh**, UNU – Institute for Water, Environment, and Health, and **Tim Kraenzlein**, OSCE. The groups reviewed the proposal for the council’s structure, governance, and needs. Participants emphasized the importance of regional representation. Suggestions included implementing staggered transitions to ensure continuity, appointing regional co-chairs, and using the Nile Network Leadership Council as a model for the selection process. There was broad agreement on the need for mechanisms to gather regular feedback from the broader Network.

The discussions on *Research Cooperation* were facilitated by **Jessica Troell**, ELI, and **Letizia Zuliani**, OSCE. Participants proposed establishing a digital platform to share ongoing projects and supported the idea of creating a research working group to develop policy briefs, identify research priorities, and facilitate collaboration across basins and regions. Priority research areas included data-sharing frameworks for transboundary basins, the economic valuation of ecosystem services, and policy innovations for equitable water access. The group also recommended organizing annual collaborative research workshops to align efforts and strengthen coordination across regions.

The fourth breakout session on *Resourcing Our Global Community* was facilitated by **Elizabeth A. Koch** (ELI) and **Dr. Saule Ospanova** (OSCE). The discussion focused on foundational financing challenges at both the global and regional/basin levels. Participants emphasized the importance of leveraging resources through partnerships and donor engagement, particularly those aligned with regional or thematic priorities. Ideas included encouraging in-kind contributions from member institutions through programming alignment and partnerships to complement financial support, as well as developing case studies for grant applications to demonstrate the financial impact of successful transboundary water cooperation projects. Participants also proposed training members on grant application processes to enhance resource mobilization capacity. Suggestions for generating internal funding included offering fee-based training sessions and soliciting voluntary contributions from member organizations.

In her closing remarks, **Tanja Miskova**, Ambassador-at-Large for Water Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia, expressed her gratitude for the unique and inclusive nature of this global community. She acknowledged the Network’s growth through exchanges, trainings, and its sense of sisterhood, referencing her own hosting of a dinner for Network members during the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Conventions (MOP10) in Ljubljana. Tanja voiced her disappointment over the limited discussion of gender equality in global water dialogues, underscoring the continued need for the Network’s work. She encouraged active community engagement in the preparatory processes for the 2026 and 2028 Water Conferences and announced upcoming meetings, including a regional meeting in Senegal in late 2025. She emphasized the importance of anticipating water and gender priorities beyond

the 2030 Agenda and noted the early stages of discussions on post-2030 frameworks. Tanja concluded by wishing everyone a happy new year.

With thanks to our growing partnership!

