

Stepping out of the 'Water-Box'

Re-thinking transboundary water cooperation

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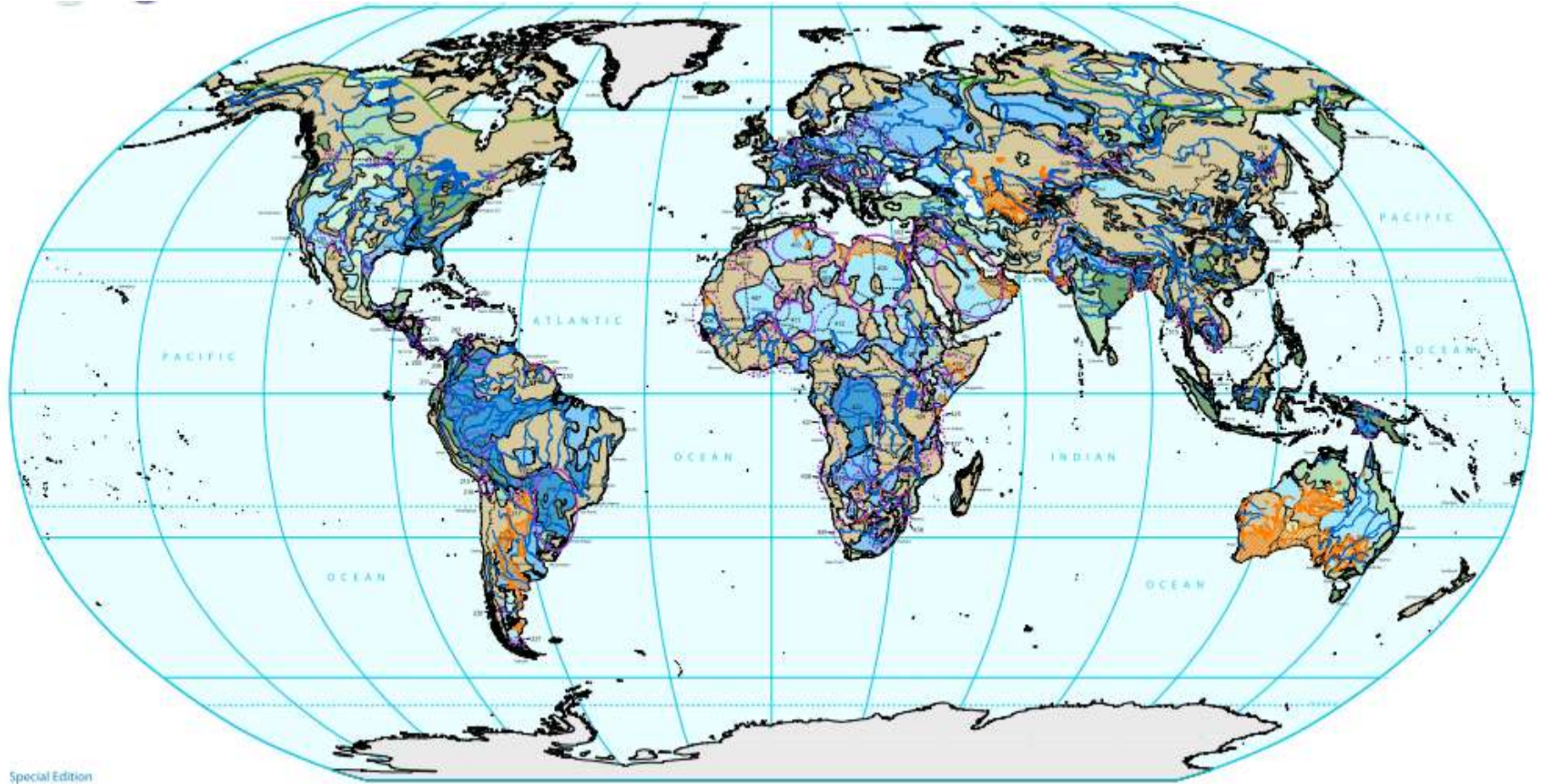
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Why Transboundary water cooperation?



- Approx. 300 transboundary ground water resources
- 263 transboundary rivers and lakes in 145 countries
- 40% of global population living in the transboundary basin
- Transboundary watershed covers half of global surface area

Water Diplomacy: Making Cooperation Work

A case from the Brahmaputra river



Water (Hydro) Diplomacy: Emerging concept

- Dynamic process that works under the premise that shared benefits of water cooperation will result in mutually acceptable benefits for riparian states (Pangare and Nishat 2014)
- Water cooperation (water as a goal in itself) vs water diplomacy (water as a means for goals beyond water, such as stability, peace and cooperation) (Schmeier 2016)
- Water diplomacy includes all measures by state and non-state actors that can be undertaken to prevent or peacefully resolve (emerging) conflicts and facilitate cooperation related to water availability, allocation or use between and within states and public and private stakeholders. (Huntjens, Yasuda, Islam, Swain, de Man, Magsig 2016)

Various Water Diplomacy Measures

- Agreements, MoUs
- Joint Institutions
- Conflict prevention through better water governance and water management, early warning of potential conflict
- Formal mediation and arbitration
- Legal procedures, fact-finding.
- Training and capacity building,
- Information/knowledge exchange, knowledge development, and good practice documentation.
- Informal institutions
- Regional cooperation
- Benefit sharing/enlarging baskets of benefits

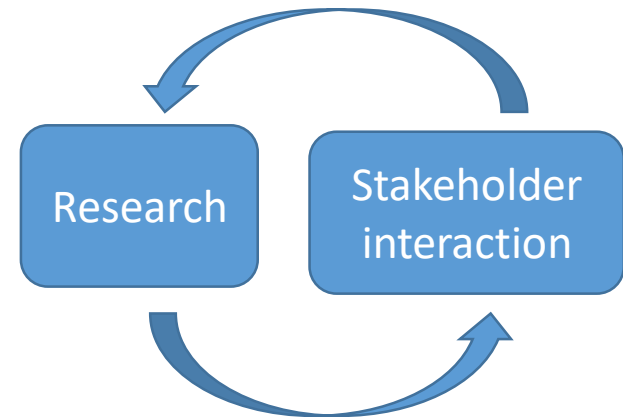
Different 'tracks' of diplomacy

- Track I diplomacy: Government to Government
- Track I.5: a situation in which official and non-official actors work together to resolve conflicts
- Track II diplomacy: Unofficial dialogues involving influential academic, religious, and NGO leaders and other civil society actors who can interact more freely than high-ranking officials.
- Track III diplomacy: People-to-people diplomacy undertaken by individuals and private groups
- Multi-track diplomacy: A term for operating on several tracks simultaneously.

Source: <http://glossary.usip.org/resource/tracks-diplomacy>

Water Diplomacy: Making Cooperation Work

- Aims to identify key factors that affect water cooperation.
- Approach: interactive process
 - Research: field based and desktop
 - Stakeholder workshop/interactions
- Methodology
 - Development of multi-track water diplomacy framework
 - Unit of analysis: Transboundary river
 - Case studies: The Lower Jordan River, the Brahmaputra river



Water Diplomacy Project: Partners



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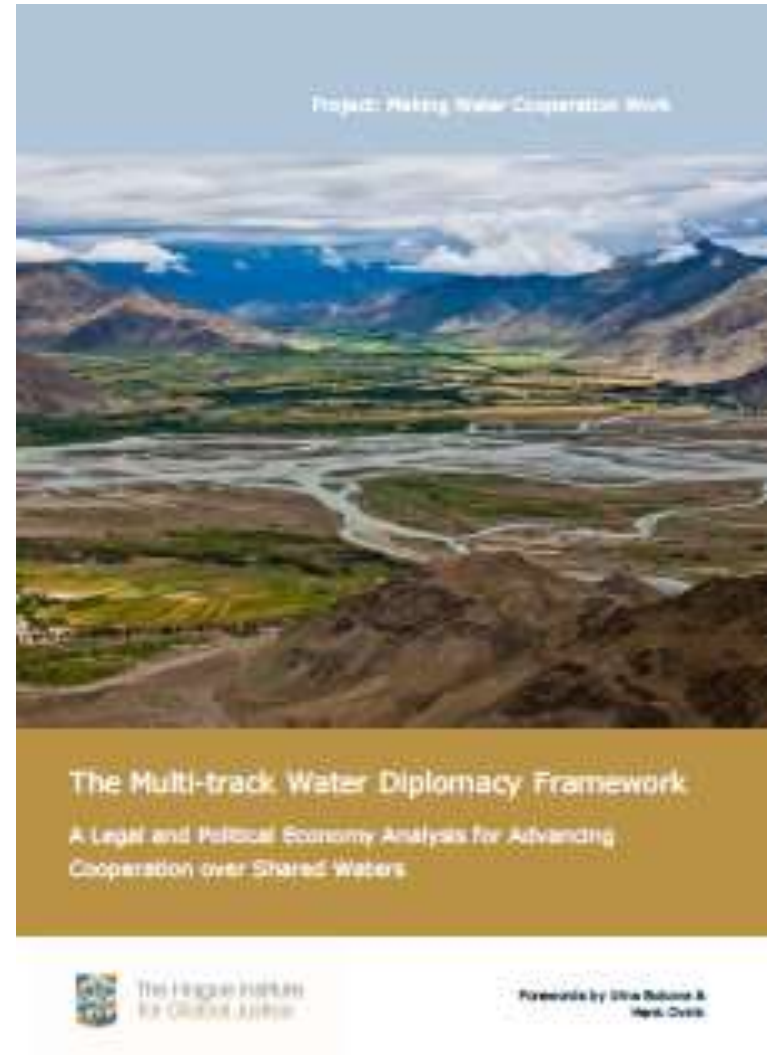
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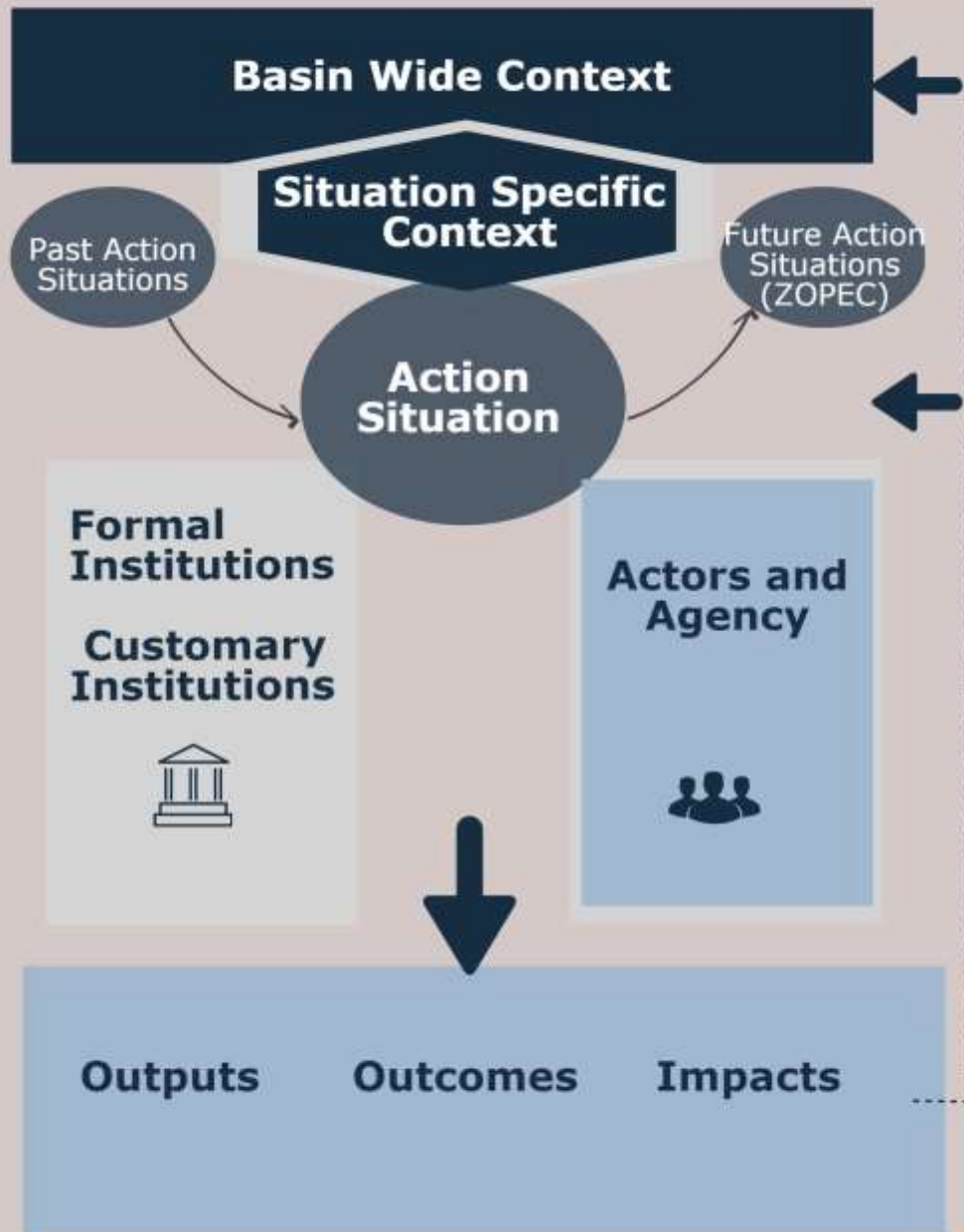
Multi-track Water Diplomacy Framework

- Purpose:
 - Analysis of water cooperation at
 - multiple levels (from local to global)
 - multiple tracks
 - current and future
- Development steps
 - Framework development based on existing literature
 - Fine-tuning of the framework based on field data





Multi-Track Water Diplomacy Framework



Example: the Brahmaputra river



Status of transboundary water cooperation on the Brahmaputra

- Track I: mostly bilateral

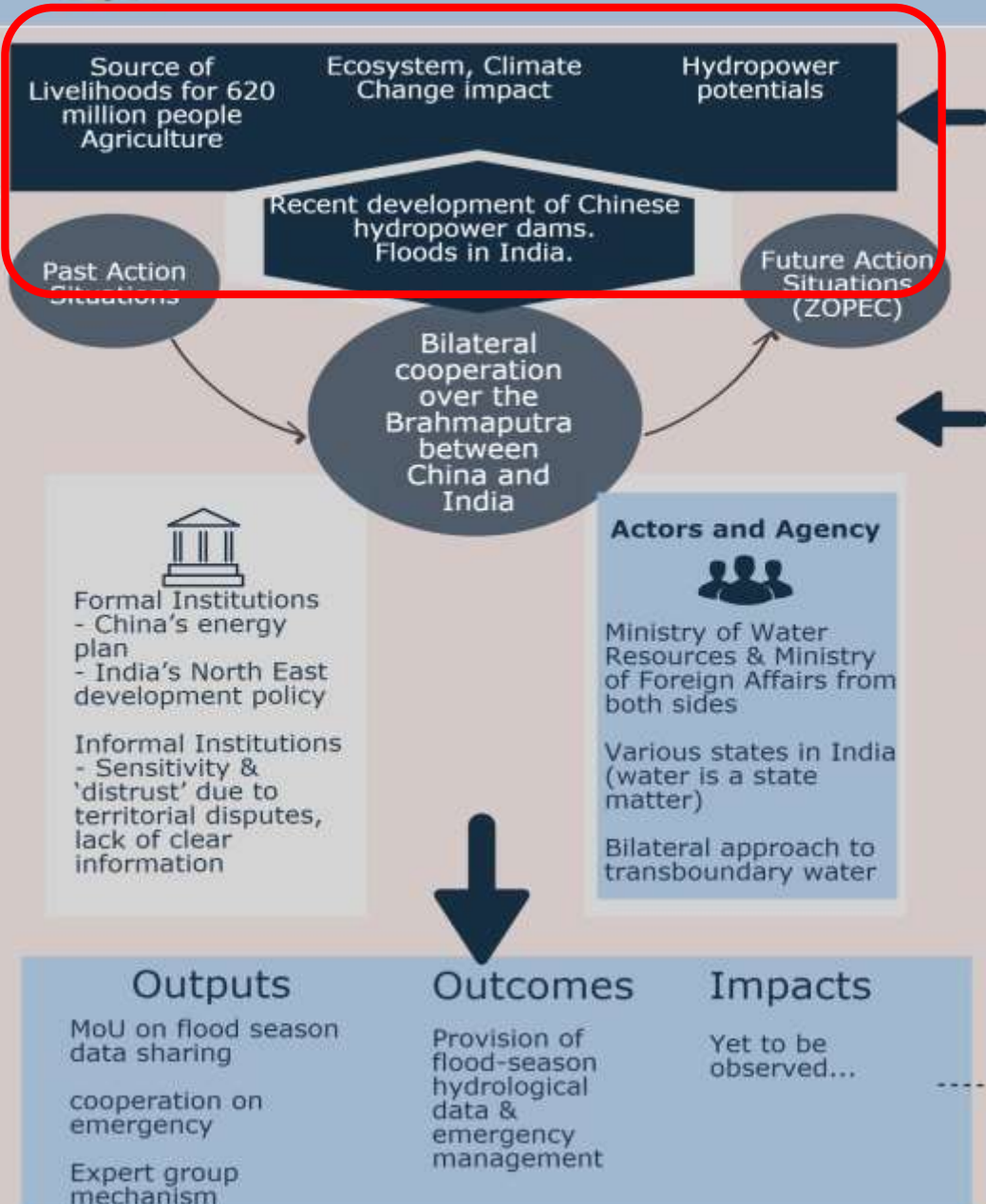
- India- China: Data sharing, Expert level mechanism, emergency response
- India-Bangladesh: Joint water committee, data sharing, navigation, ongoing process for Teesta agreement
- Bangladesh-China: Data sharing
- India- Bhutan: Cooperation through hydropower
- Bangladesh-Bhutan (with India involved): Cooperation through hydropower

- Track II/III

- Ecosystems for Life (IUCN)
- Brahmaputra Dialogue (Saci waters)
- Abu Dhabi dialogue/SAWI (World Bank)
- Collaboration of scientists through ICIMOD (i.e. Brahmaputra-Saleween landscape)



India-China bilateral cooperation

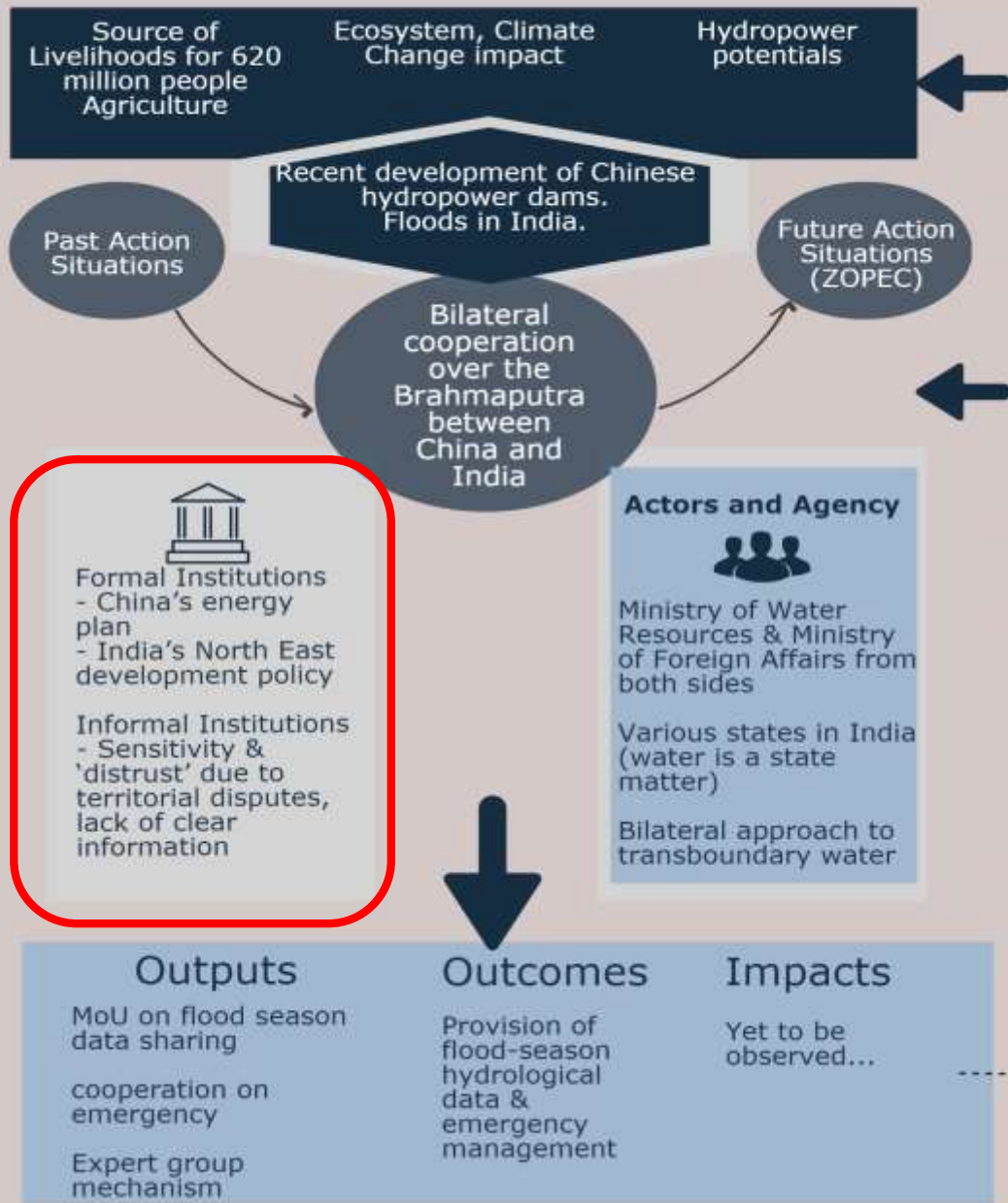


Basin Context

- Brahmaputra-Ganges Basin: source of livelihoods for 620 million people
- Diverse ecosystem
- Climate change impact
- Hydropower potential

Situation specific context

- Recent development of Chinese Hydropower dams
- Floods in India

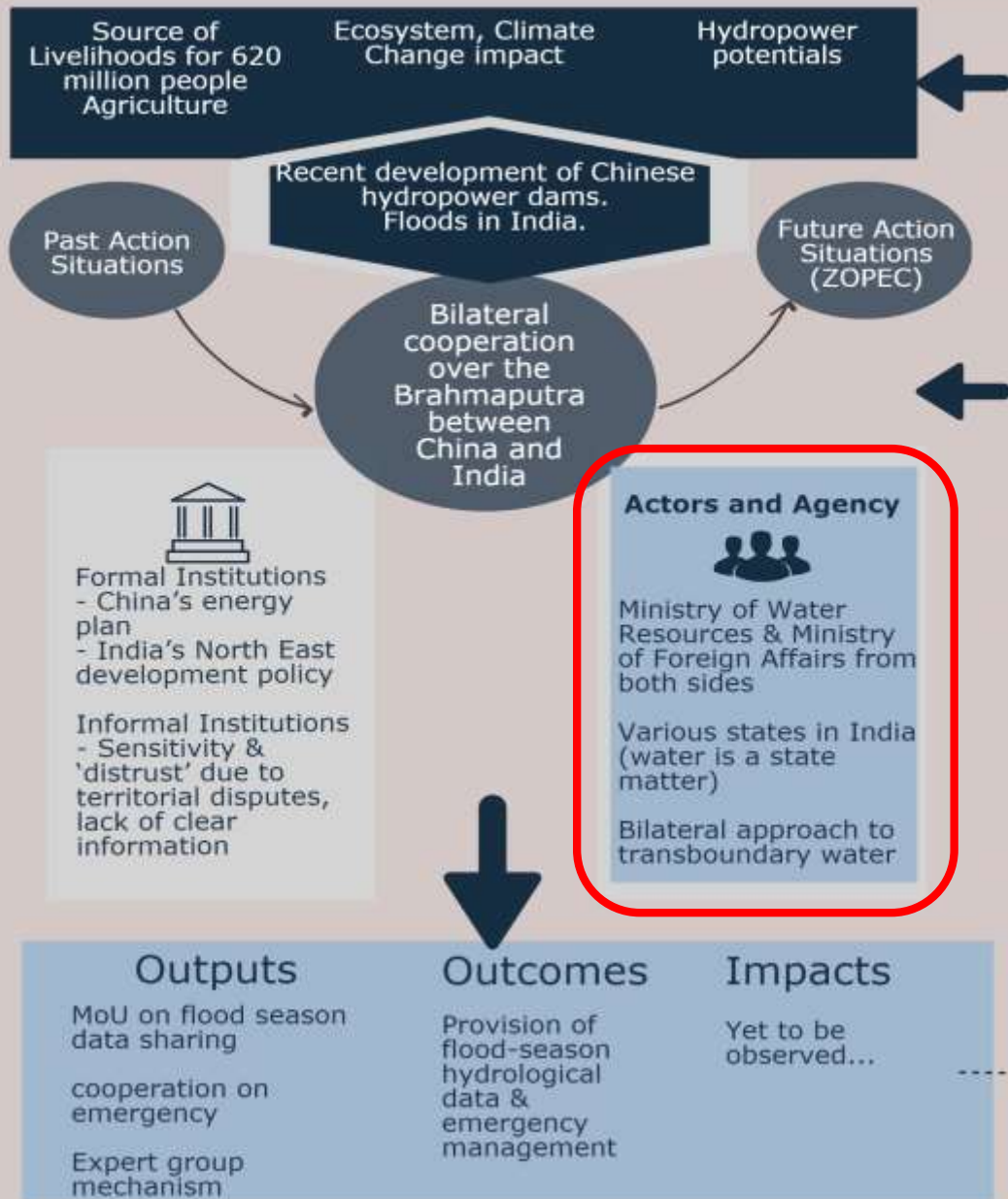


Formal Institutions

- China's energy policy
- Open West Policy
- India's North East Development Policy

Customary Institutions

- Sensitivity and 'distrust' due to territorial disputes, lack of clear information



Actors and Agency

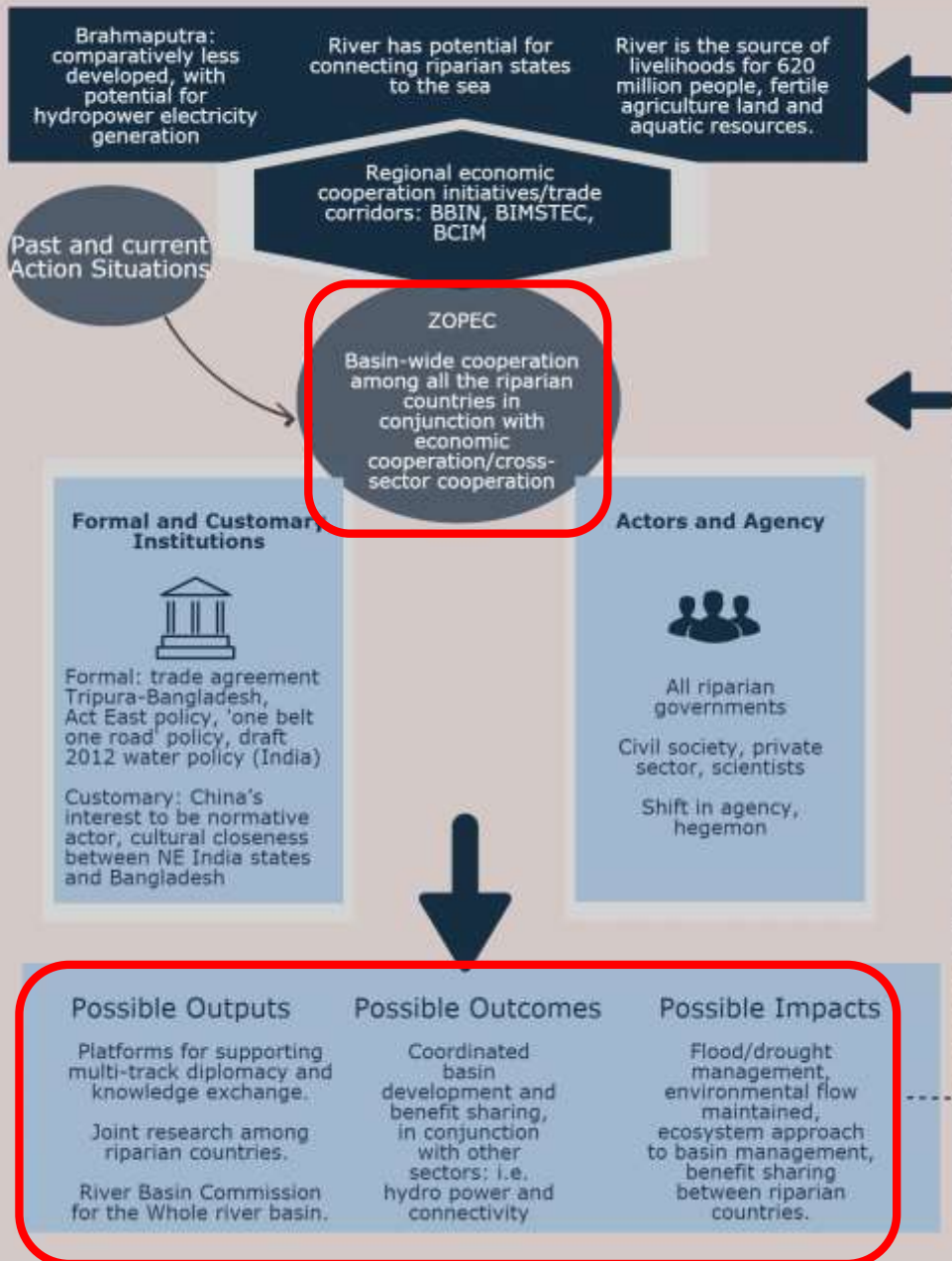
- Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in both countries.
- Various states in India
- Bilateral approach to transboundary water

ZOPEC

- Zone of Possible Effective Cooperation.
- Potential areas that could promote effective cooperation and benefit all parties involved in managing shared water.
- Combination of viable future action situations



Zone of Possible Effective Cooperation (ZOPEC)



ZOPEC

- Basin-wide cooperation among all the riparian countries through cross-sector cooperation

Possible Outputs

- Platforms for supporting multi-track water diplomacy and knowledge exchange
- Joint research among riparian countries
- River Basin Commission for the whole basin.

Possible Outcomes

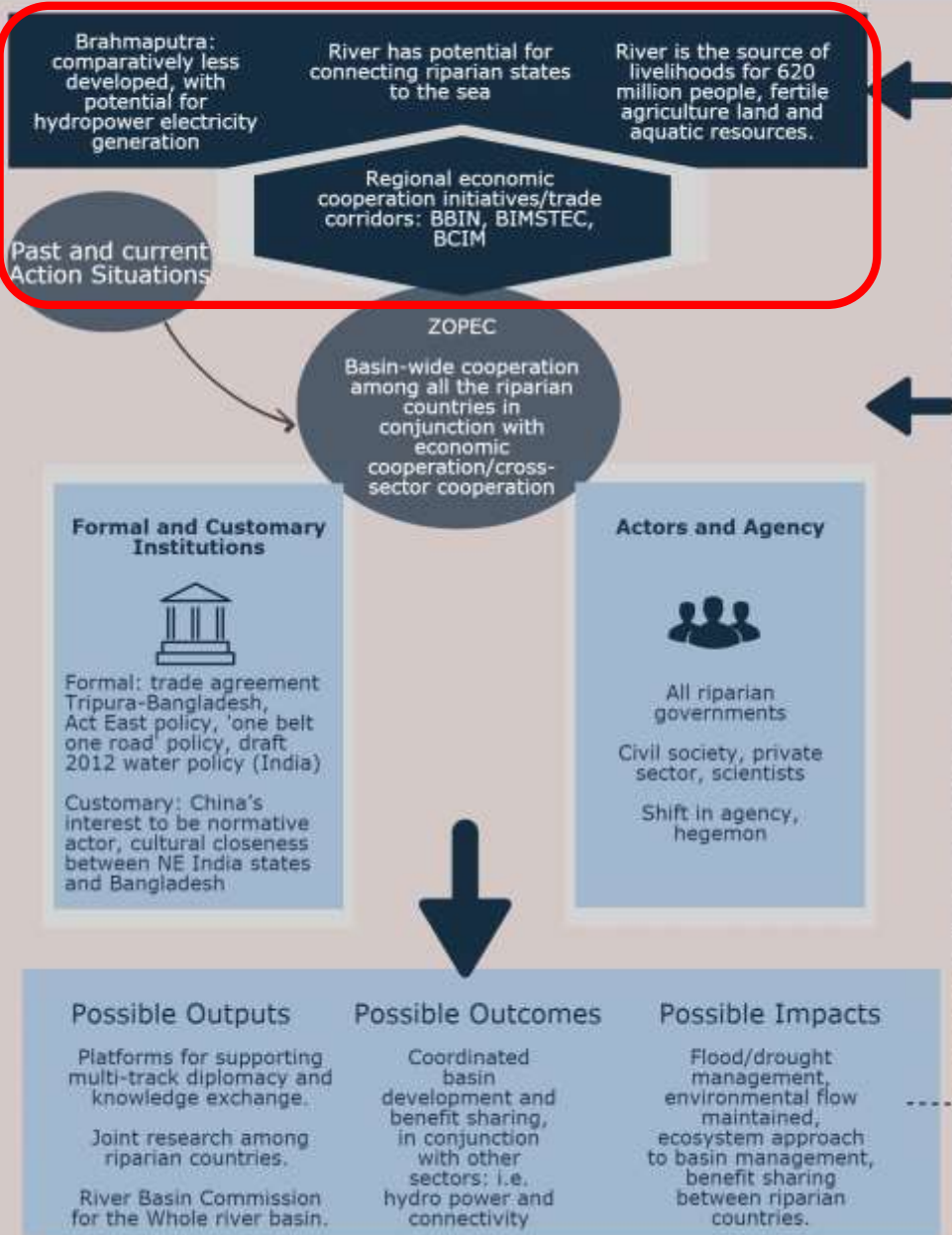
- Coordinated basin development
- Benefit sharing across sector

Possible Impacts

- Environmental flow maintained.
- Ecosystem approach to basin management.
- Benefit shared among all riparian countries



Zone of Possible Effective Cooperation (ZOPEC)



Basin Wide Context

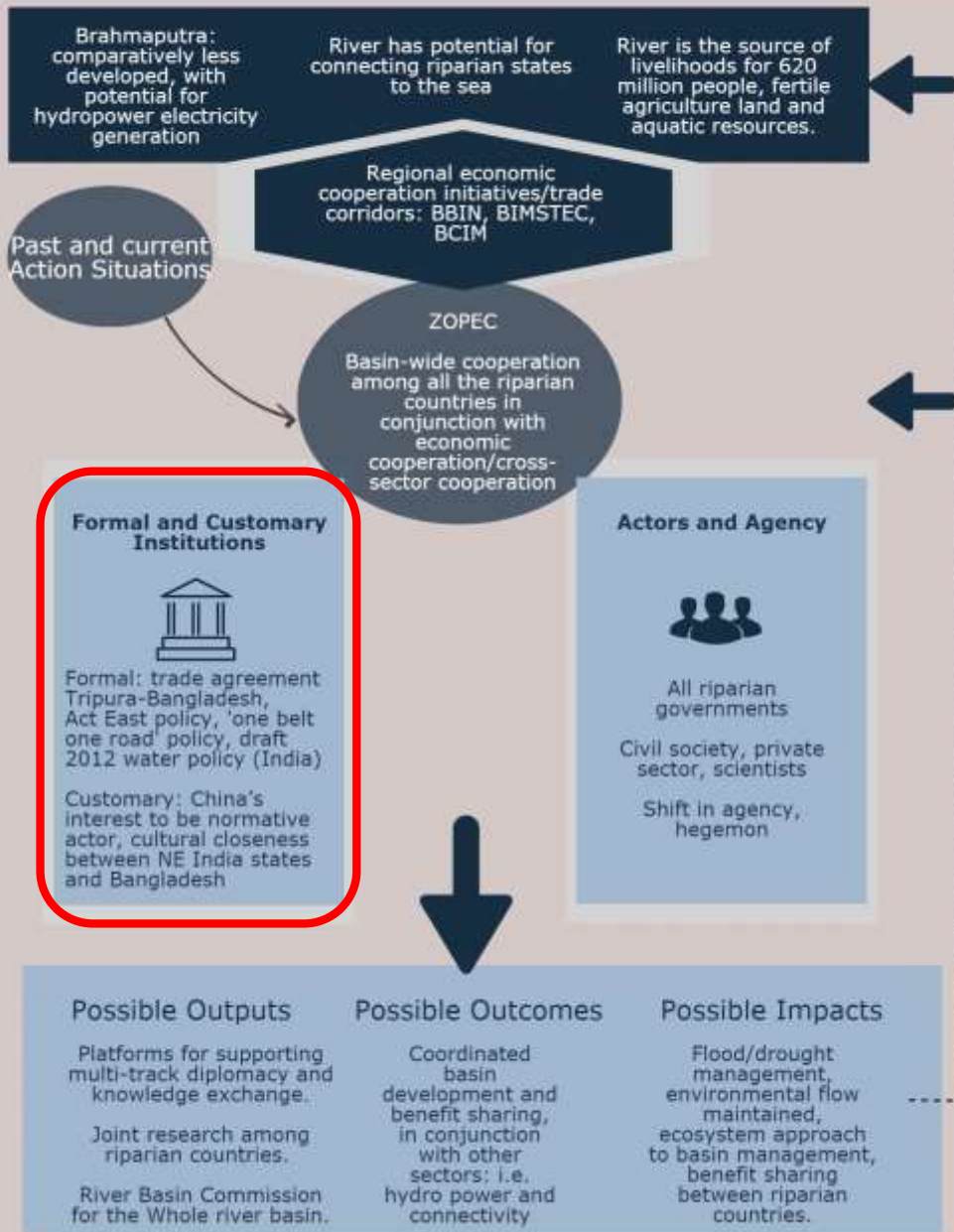
- Comparatively less developed.
- Potential for hydropower electricity generation
- Potential for connectivity

Situation Specific Context

- Regional economic cooperation initiatives/trade corridors.
 - BBIN
 - BIMSTEC
 - BCIM



Zone of Possible Effective Cooperation (ZOPEC)



Formal Institutions

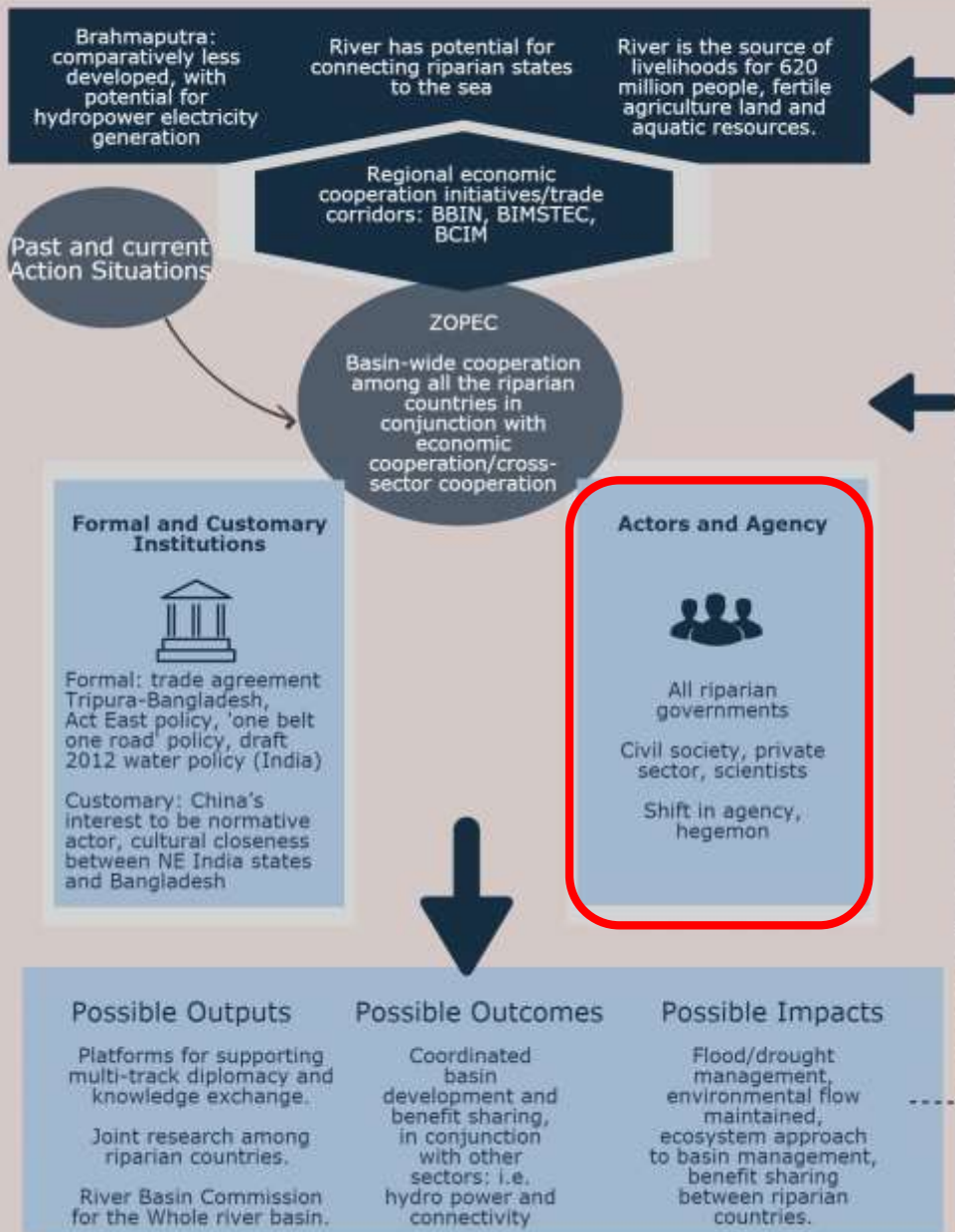
- Trade Agreement Tripura-Bangladesh
- Act East Policy
- One Belt One Road Policy
- Draft 2012 water Policy

Customary Institutions

- China's interest to be a normative actor
- Cultural closeness between Northeast India and Bangladesh



Zone of Possible Effective Cooperation (ZOPEC)



Actors and Agency

- All riparian governments
- Civil society
- Scientists
- Private Sector
- Shift in agency, hegemon

Conclusion

- Importance of stepping out of sectoral approach in water cooperation.
- Analytical framework for potential uses.
 - Analysis of current and future cooperation
 - As a diagnostic tool for informing decision-making
 - Exploring new and refining existing approaches and strategies for transboundary water cooperation
- Expected publications in 2017
 - Basin analysis of the Brahmaputra river and the Lower Jordan river.
 - Journal publications